

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care

Difficult Education: aporetic philosophy in Hegel, Rose, Williams and Tubbs

Rebekah Howes

Doctor of Philosophy

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This Thesis has been completed as a requirement for a postgraduate research degree of the  
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## ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

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This thesis explores the philosophical and educational projects of Rowan Williams and Nigel Tubbs. It argues that there is a shared Hegelian ground in their work, fundamentally rooted in the reading of Hegel by the philosopher Gillian Rose, which brings them into conversation around the notion that 'difficulty' is philosophically, educationally and spiritually significant. To do this, the thesis will explore Rose's retrieval of Hegelian speculative experience in *Hegel Contra Sociology*, for it is the pivotal reading upon which Williams and Tubbs evolve their own Hegelianism. It will also examine the central concepts of life and death and master and slave in Hegel as the structure of experience within which difficulty knows itself to be education. In this way, the thesis argues that philosophical experience has education as the very substance of what it is and does.

In Williams, across the landscape of his social, political and religious interventions, negative and speculative experience is thought through with remarkable acuity and insight. The thesis will explore the philosophical underpinnings of these insights as it is developed in a sophisticated theory of 'negotiation', 'self-dispossession' and 'iconic' learning. I will also argue that his philosophical thinking is articulated most powerfully in his analysis of the works of Dostoevsky. In Tubbs, Hegelian philosophy underpins a compelling theory of education embodied in the philosophical structure and experience of two degrees at the University of Winchester. I will show how it is also carried in and by the life and truth of the teacher/student relation. Both projects, albeit in different ways, are a philosophy of difficulty brought to bear on many of the problems facing social and political relations.

The thesis as a whole works primarily with the educational theorising of Tubbs, for it is the light by which, I argue, Williams' work can be better understood.

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in. (Cohen, 2009: 18)

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Rebekah Howes declare that the thesis entitled 'Difficult Education: aporetic philosophy in Hegel, Rose, Williams and Tubbs and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

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## *For Eleanor and Eve*

### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my mother and father whose love, politics, faith, humour and humanity continue to nourish me.

I would also like to thank my daughters Eleanor and Eve, to whom the thesis is dedicated. You have endured so much and yet have continued to bring immense joy and support to me throughout the writing of the thesis. You are my beautiful girls with a life of learning ahead of you.

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Finally, I must say thank you to my Beloved. Somehow, 'in the splinters that we carry', in passion, sadness and joy, we continue to sustain and nurture the truth of love as the work of learning. Thank you...

## Introduction

The poet Rilke wrote in *Letters to a Young Poet* that 'we must hold to what is difficult' (Rilke, 2004: 41). And he urged the young poet to whom he was corresponding, 'to try to love the questions themselves', not to 'seek the answers' because we 'would not be able to live them' (Rilke, 2004: 27). Rilke's letters and his poetry are testament to an imaginative life which knew the struggle and failure to speak truthfully in and about the world and about human experience. But they are also testament to the depths of truth that are to be found there. He knew that somehow, difficulty existed for its own sake. More recently, the poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen has written, in what he calls 'more of a prayer' than a song, that 'if it be your will, that a voice be true, from this broken hill, I will sing to you' (Cohen, 2009: 68). Here, like many a great poet, composer, author and artist, Cohen witnesses to something of the truth that lies in brokenness. When we experience and consider the world, the other, love, loss and the irreducibly human, the unrelenting fact of brokenness invites us in and commends that we know ourselves within it.

It is something of this sense of the importance of difficulty and brokenness that my thesis seeks to explore. I want to do this by bringing together what I consider to be too extraordinary philosophical and educational projects. The first of these is the philosophical thinking of Rowan Williams, in particular, the Hegelianism which underpins his more recent work. This is because there are Hegelian roots in his work – negative and speculative – which yield a particularly interesting educational dimension to his social and political interventions and arguments. I want to bring this to the fore because there is, as yet, no recognition of this notion of learning in Williams and this has implications for how we understand his work as a whole.

The second project is the philosophical and educational work of Nigel Tubbs, whose theory of philosophical education, a profoundly Hegelian project, argues that the difficulties of philosophical experience are subjective substance, the whole of the life of truth in and as the education of consciousness. What is interesting about both projects, which are very different in their respective fields, is that they share a particular reading of Hegel by the philosopher Gillian Rose. This brings their work into a beautifully shared ground of Hegelian speculative experience which, I argue, is education. At stake in much of their work then, and in my thesis, is this idea of difficulty as learning. We live in a culture and a politics which so easily refuses the work of the negative so that we suppress and avoid the very sinews of human experience by which it is, in truth, actual as work and

as education. Without a concept of philosophy as education, we are unable to know freedom, the other, humanity and God and are thus left powerless to effect any real change in the world.

The thesis began, in one sense, in 2006 when as an undergraduate at the University of Winchester I stumbled across the book *Lost Icons*. It was to have a significant impact on the direction that my thinking and my education was to take. To understand the reasons for this however, I need first of all to explain how I got there. My background was in the church. More specifically, I was the daughter of a priest in the inner city of London during the 1980s. It was a background within which the socialist principles of my parents underpinned a life of faith, politics, family and church life to such an extent, that from a young age, thinking about God, humanity, justice, poverty, life and death was part of my growing soul. In the rather strongly worded terms of Simone Weil, 'the suffering all over the world obsess[ed] and overwhelm[ed] me' (Weil cited in Miles, 1986: 44) and I would spend many years trying to understand it and cope with the contradictions and dilemmas it presented. It was that eternal difficulty – how does one live?

I continued to grapple with this question and did so in the light of a faith that was open, questioning and deeply spiritual. One of the things I can remember my father reminding me of from time to time, was the commandment to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength'. This was, said my father, something not always given its due weight within a life of faith. Thinking meant questions, questions meant doubt, doubt meant struggle and these were the very experiences that gave substance to the heart, mind and soul. My father has been a huge influence in the background of the PhD. Not only is he a gifted preacher and thinker, able to plunge great depths of humour and pathos in his preaching and general demeanour, but he always asks the big questions, wonders at them and sheds tears at the suffering and beauty of humanity in its joys and difficulties. Add to this, the spiritual feminism and love of my mother, now also a priest, and her ability to carry the struggle of the woman in and for a life of faith, and I could not help but grow into a questioning, political and spiritual life.

As I reached the age where freedom seeks its independence from parental and child influences however, I gradually came to question my faith within a burgeoning socialism and cultural politics of identity. Like many others, I found it difficult to hold to God in a world where capitalism reached new heights of global inequality, injustice and varying insidious forms of slavery. And so, in what was a difficult decision, I put away what I thought were 'childish things' and embarked on an adult life without God. It was the time for music, protest, love and eventually children. During these years I found it very difficult to even enter a church.



The result was that my politics lost its spiritual connection; it lost the context within which it had made sense. But, in recollection, the spiritual was always in the background, waiting only for a different path on which to explore the difficulties of the relation between politics and God again. I discovered this path in a return to University in 2001, now a mother of two young girls. I found on the Education Studies degree at Winchester that my political questions were being spoken to most powerfully in ways that opened up the philosophical life. But I could not have imagined the impact that this was to have. I was introduced to Plato, Kant, Marx, Adorno and others, and took time to think about the questions of theory of practice, the concept of freedom, the relation between the universal and the particular. But what was perhaps most unexpected was the contribution of one further concept – education – a concept being experienced in its most difficult, challenging and painful of ways. This is because the degree retrieved a way to think the relation between God and politics once again, only this time, philosophically. It made me uncertain and vulnerable. Most crucial to this experience of the degree however was the work of Tubbs and his theory of philosophical education. It seemed that in all of the doubts and struggles that I was having, in all of the ways that my voice was being lost and changed, there was meaning to be found, meaning which was to discover its own truth in and as education. It was during this time that *Lost Icons* spoke to the philosophical and political depths I had been struggling with, a book written by an archbishop of all people. It began to retrieve, along with Hegel and Rose and Tubbs, the relation between politics and God again.

In the last year of the degree I was introduced to Hegel and Rose in more depth and suddenly discovered that the difficult middle was now between philosophy and politics and philosophy and religion, but finding this middle to be somehow the truth of the relation as learning. The PhD was a continuation of the questions raised at the end of the dissertation; questions still being asked but changed and deepened by the journey. It led to a bringing together of the work of Williams and Tubbs whose shared roots in Hegel and Rose offer a remarkable yet difficult way to explore such questions.

The importance of the work of Williams and Tubbs for my own journey over the last ten years cannot be underestimated. Williams' work, which I began to explore after *Lost Icons*, speaks to philosophical difficulty at a deep level and within a public arena not always amenable to a life of thinking. And the work of Tubbs as a teacher and as a thinker commends all who risk a higher education to know the experience of difficulty as profoundly meaningful and to know it as subjective substance. The relation between them both, and therein the relation they have to Rose and Hegel, has opened up in my own work a very real struggle and commitment to the work of philosophy as

education. The struggle is, in one sense, a form of prayer; that reading, writing, teaching and loving 'attention', as Weil argued, that can be seen as a prayerful life. This is now its own very personal journey to know the humility and sadness that is carried in and by the truth of education. So it is that the thesis works with some of these long standing themes and enables me to bring four thinkers together whose witness to the negative as philosophy, as work, as love, as God and as education, offers modernity a most compelling life of truth.

Chapter one begins the story by looking at the questions and interventions of Rowan Williams across the public landscape of his work in recent years. It draws attention to the theme of difficulty in these interventions and to the fact that he returns to articulate the experience of loss, doubt, failure and risk, time and again in the numerous debates to which he contributes. At root, the philosophical hinterland that his interventions lean in and toward has the experience of difficulty as educationally and spiritually significant.

This is contrasted in chapter two with an overview of the philosophical and educational project of Tubbs. It considers the nature of two degrees set up by Tubbs at the University of Winchester over the last twenty years and the Hegelian underpinnings of the programmes. It places particular emphasis on the recently introduced Modern Liberal Arts programme and the question of first principles that it retrieves for a modern notion of higher education and modern metaphysics. I also explore the work of Tubbs as a story of education; his education, for this provides an important context for the philosophical project as a whole. Chapters one and two point to the Hegelian influences that the rest of the thesis will explore.

Chapter three takes a different turn and examines Rose's retrieval of Hegelian speculative experience in *Hegel Contra Sociology*. It is the pivotal reading of Hegel upon which Williams and Tubbs evolve their own Hegelianism. Her reading retrieves the 'ineluctable difficulty' (Rose, 2009: Preface) of the dualisms and oppositions of modernity and the speculative possibilities in Hegel for social and political thought. The chapter will also introduce her concept of the 'broken middle'. Although not a central idea in the thesis as a whole, it nevertheless deserves a mention here. This is because it is a part of the evolution of Tubbs' thinking and is present also in how both Williams and Tubbs think the nature of relation, which is an important theme in the thesis. In *Contradiction of Enlightenment*, Tubbs writes that Rose's concept of the broken middle is 'philosophical and autobiographical', that it 'expresses the broken middle of the self, or of self-relation' (Tubbs, 1997:1). He writes that a middle is 'an indeterminate universal. It is a whole. It has nothing lying outside of it upon which it is dependent' (Tubbs, 1997:1). A middle is a pure unity with itself and as such is non-relation. The trouble with this is however, that 'nothing which is known can remain

indeterminate' (Tubbs, 1997:1) or outside of relation. And so for the middle to be known, is for it to be already something, and the moment that it is mediated in this way it has 'fallen within the logic of self-relation' (Tubbs, 1997:1). 'A middle... is never itself', he writes, 'it is always a broken middle' (Tubbs, 1997:1). It has been one of the temptations of the thesis to write about this middle or gap as 'something'. But this would be to posit it as something it can never be. The broken middle can only be known in and as the relation which is already its collapse. It means that knowing always reproduces the separation, because it is the separation. The insight that Tubbs provides here is that the broken middle which knows itself, is also the truth of itself in the broken middle. The educational implications of this will become clearer as the thesis develops.

I take the unusual strategy in chapter four of reading the central Hegelian concepts of life and death and master and slave, together with a reading of the doctrine of essence and the 'Notion' in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. This places Hegel, along with Rose, at the heart of the thesis, out of which Williams and Tubbs can be explored and brought into conversation. Hegel and Rose give Williams and Tubbs the roots by which to develop a sophisticated theory of the negative and speculative. This chapter draws attention to the educative dimension of these concepts, laying the ground for Tubbs reading of them in the subsequent chapter.

In chapter five, I explore Tubbs' theory of *Education in Hegel*. Its aim is to show how he finds a theory of philosophical education at the heart of Hegelian philosophy. He argues that in the relations of life and death and master and slave, philosophical education as recollection has its truth in the broken middle of the relations which constitute the conditions of the possibility of our thinking. It is the truth of the *Aufhebung* which Tubbs gives special emphasis too, because it is that which comprehends the truth of relation in and as the subject and substance of relation. It is education known in and as the form and content of experience and is a theory of education for its own sake. Tubbs brings this to bear on some of the most important questions of social and political relations.

Chapter six returns to Williams and considers the Hegelianism that underpins his work. His reading of Hegel is deeply influenced by Gillian Rose, whose 'magisterial' (Williams, 2012: 6) presence continues to shape his work to date. The chapter begins by exploring the question of what it means to think in Hegel and then unfolds the significance of this for Williams, in the terms of the dialectic, for a theory of 'negotiation' and 'self-dispossession'. It will also pursue the implications of his Hegel for an understanding of politics, metaphysics and God. Throughout the analysis, I will be drawing attention to the educative dimension of his reading of Hegel and Rose. This is because, when the language of the negative and the speculative is a language of learning in Williams, we find his most difficult and profound articulations of truth, freedom and God.

These themes continue in chapter seven when we look at how the negative and speculative underpinnings of Williams' philosophical thought shape a remarkable analysis of Dostoevsky's fiction. I have chosen to concentrate on this book for the thesis because in it, I argue, we see Williams' passion and deeply profound insights into human experience most powerfully articulated. It is quite an extraordinary book that enlarges our mental horizons and our capacity to think in and to the difficulties and losses of the inner life within which, for Williams, God, the world and the other are carried. I will pick out a number of themes in the book. These will be, respectively, truth, freedom, the Devil, dialogue and the nature of the iconic soul. Once again, the depths to which Williams takes us in Dostoevsky are profoundly educational ones.

In the last chapter, I discuss the work of Williams and Tubbs in the context of what they do as priest and teacher. This is first of all, to address the question of intervention on the part of those who work for the truth of negative and speculative experience. To this end I examine a philosophy of the teacher and the priest within which the difficulties of power and authority are understood as substantial. But I also want to do justice to their thinking as a lived education or as subjective substance. The chapter ends in the broken middle of philosophy and religion; just as much a broken middle between politics and religion, politics and philosophy, philosophy and education. But the truth of this broken middle of the thesis is a voice; my voice, still learning and still struggling to live the integrity of learning as an end in-itself.

# 1

## Williams: Questions and Interventions

*We test the feel of an unyielding difficulty* (Williams, 2002: 84)

### Introduction

It is the aim of this chapter to introduce the work of Rowan Williams from across a broad range of his contributions to and interventions in the social and political landscape of contemporary society. This will include his handling of the crises that beset the Anglican Communion and the Church of England during his time as Archbishop. It is not the aim of this chapter to delve into the more academic underpinnings of these interventions but to draw attention to certain ideas and themes in them as a springboard to the more difficult philosophical thinking which we will explore in Williams later in the thesis.

These ideas and themes I argue have a common thread. They work with and are underpinned by a notion of ‘difficulty’ which Williams does not seek to resolve or suppress but rather to understand as philosophically and educationally significant. His work, I argue, makes difficulty the *content* of a process of learning. By drawing attention to its *experience* – and I mean here the experience of contradiction, doubt, uncertainty, struggle, limit, failure and risk, he asks that we think what difficulty might mean for our being human and what it might teach us about truth and about God.

But this dimension to his work - as critique, as pedagogy and as philosophy has not been given its due attention.<sup>1</sup> This is in part what my thesis seeks to redress by exploring Williams’ relation to Hegel and Rose for to understand something of how he works with difficulty is for us to enter a world of dialectics and speculative philosophy. In the thesis this will bring Williams into conversation with the alternative but complementary educational reading of Hegel and Rose by Tubbs<sup>2</sup> whose work helps us to read Williams’ philosophical thinking as a notion of education.

But one of the reasons that this educational element of his thinking is so easily missed or avoided is that it is not an explicit theory of learning. I will argue in the thesis that at times this is the speculative leap he fails to make, that he lacks the transition to a more explicit theory of education

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<sup>1</sup> This question of pedagogy in Williams is one that I will return to in the light of the thesis in the last chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter five

that sometimes the work demands of itself. But this does not detract from its implicit presence, particularly in relation to his retrieval of the philosophical importance of difficulty.

It is my contention therefore, that his work requires to be read as *immanently* educational, rooted fundamentally in his understanding of negative and speculative philosophy. It is this internal logic to his philosophical thinking and to his social and political interventions which I want to call a notion of education.<sup>3</sup> It is a thinking which, as we will see in chapter six, found itself changed and deeply influenced by a particular reading of Hegel by Gillian Rose. Underpinned by this reading there is, I argue, a Hegelianism which presses Williams always towards the language of learning and it is this inevitability in his work which is interesting for the thesis because it constitutes the integrity of Williams as a thinker, writer, priest and Archbishop. In the same way I will argue it is also the integrity of Rose and Tubbs, precisely because it is the *work* of learning.

What I mean by this will become clearer as the thesis unfolds but perhaps the following from Tubbs will suffice for the moment. He writes in *Philosophy's Higher Education* that when we read such thinkers as Hegel or Nietzsche, we do not do justice to their thinking if we do not see the struggle of their work to be its own higher education. He writes that 'at root both are witnessing to...learning' (Tubbs, 2004: xiii-xiv). It is something of this idea of a witness to learning, as the 'immanent condition of its own possibility in and as experience' (Tubbs, 2004: xiv) that I argue we see in Williams. It also constitutes his interpretation of the work of others and thus his own witness to difficulty as formative and substantial.

In what follows I give a brief biography of Williams and an overview of some of his key interventions and the themes which underpin them. I will then make a selection of some of these in a series of subheadings and will draw attention to the relation between difficulty and education in them in order that we can understand the subtleties and complexities of his work a little better. But the diversity of his interests and influences as well as the energy and depth of his writings and imagination means a rich source of works from which to choose. I hope that the selections I have made give the reader an impression of both the expansiveness of his thinking and the negative nuances contained within it.

## A Life of Learning

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<sup>3</sup> We will explore the significance of the 'notion' as an educational movement in Hegel in chapter four.

Born in 1950 in Swansea Rowan Williams from a young age was accustomed to the solitude, escapism and intellectual demands offered by the world of literature, poetry and history. An only child, he suffered with meningitis as a boy and ended up permanently excluded from sports at school ultimately allowing him the space to expand further into a life of reading and learning. Literature, history, theology, philosophy and drama, these were the marks of a teenage life carving out a faith which was to eventually lead to ordination.

Williams went to Cambridge to study theology at undergraduate level, then to Oxford for his doctorate on the negative theology of the Russian theologian Vladimir Lossky. This began a lifetime's interest in all things Russian – its theology, its orthodox Christianity, its literature and its language. Negative theology set Williams on a journey of intellectual discovery that helped to define his motivation as a thinker and a writer, shaping the form and content of his work, his appreciation of the reading of texts and above all his faith. In 1991 he became Bishop of Monmouth; in 1999 the Archbishop of Wales and in 2002 the first Welsh Archbishop of Canterbury.

As far as his supporters in the church are concerned he is, as Tom Wright asserts, a 'thinker's thinker...a classic Anglican theologian, not one for big, clunky systems, but solid, deep and rich in his study of the Bible and the Fathers'.<sup>4</sup> Wright also conveys something of what it is that makes Williams remarkable for both friends and foes alike. He writes that 'to hear Rowan expounding St John or St Augustine is to encounter Anglican theology at its best. Watch him translate that theology into pastoral mode: with children, say, or praying quietly with someone in the wings of a conference'.<sup>5</sup>

Williams is a polymath of extraordinary breadth and depth. Through his academic writings, speeches, sermons and articles, he has channelled his thinking across an enormously wide ranging social, political, cultural and religious landscape. One might say that there is no area to which he has not or could not offer intelligent, thoughtful and insightful contributions. Through his exceptional abilities as a writer and a thinker he stretches our own thinking, demands that it plunges depths ordinarily hidden or veiled and asks that we *labour with this difficulty*. This is because for Williams, at the root of the work required to think ourselves and the world there is a question being asked of us - 'what are we prepared to learn?' (Williams, 2002: x author's emphasis).

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<sup>4</sup> Wright, T. 2012 *Fulcrum magazine* [online] Available at: <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/710> [Accessed 14 July 2013]

<sup>5</sup> Wright, T. 2012 *Fulcrum magazine* [online] Available at: <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/710> [Accessed 14 July 2013]

It is important to recognise that this is a question central to his work as a whole. It shows us that he is putting the question of learning at the heart of any intelligent undertaking to think ourselves. This is significant, I argue, because if learning is what happens in the difficulty of this thinking then difficulty has a truth for us that requires to be understood if it is to sustain its being educative. Williams takes this thinking of difficulty and what he sees to be its question of us, to those deeply human experiences of struggle and uncertainty – of life and death, of power, freedom, the other, truth, faith, including the difficulty of education itself. It is in the actualities of these experiences that we come face to face with the work to bring that difficulty and its vulnerability to truth.

The most 'natural' of tendencies however is to run from difficulty because it opens up those depths we ordinarily mask; the loss of being who we are, of being in a stable relation to the world as it appears. We are like the prisoner in Plato's cave. In being freed from the shadows the prisoner might be so pained and unsettled by the untruth of things that the temptation is to 'flee towards the things he's able to see, believing that they're really clearer than the ones he's been shown' (Plato, 1997: 1133). We too face this temptation to return from a place of uncertainty and doubt to one in which we are secure in our knowing. But Williams has a remarkable ability to take us by the hand and lead us through these streets of uncertainty, helping us to trace and see with clearer eyes the devastating fact of truth as he sees it. For Williams, the experiences by which we are negated, alone, made vulnerable, powerless, guilty and sinful, are those which also resource us. They allow us to find room for a thinking and a re-imagining of ourselves but only because these 'clefs' between self and other and self and God constitute the actuality of a human freedom and a human life that is, for Williams, an eternal one.

His most notable intellectual forays include intervening in debates on the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, questioning the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' and controversially arguing that certain aspects of Sharia law could be incorporated into the British legal system. In more recent years he has been vocal in challenging the UK coalition government's concept of the 'big society', its cuts to welfare services and the disturbingly high levels of social and economic deprivation in cities and its attending privation of social and political freedoms. He has also been bold in his justification of faith schools and the importance of religious education.

Williams' interest in the Arts has also enabled him to be part of a much wider cultural scene engaging in debates concerning the nature and ethics of the Arts. His work on such authors as Dostoevsky, which we will explore in chapter seven, CS Lewis, as well as numerous works of literature, plus his interest in the poetry of TS Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Rilke and Waldo Williams to name but a few, has firmly established his credentials as a literary intellectual. Such an array of



talents, interests and interventions makes Williams interesting not just as a Christian thinker but as someone who is politically and culturally significant for our time. In what follows we will see how some of these social and political interventions articulate the difficulties and depths of human experience and what is at stake for Williams in a modern culture which eschews difficulty. We will see that this has fundamentally to do with our ability to learn.

## *Time to Learn*

One of the areas that Williams has written and spoken on extensively during his time as Archbishop is childhood. And whilst the interventions he has made in this area are part of wider discourses and debates about childhood and education, his particular contribution concerns the deeper issue of freedom in its social, political, philosophical and educational significance.

Modern freedom is bound up with our fundamental ability to make choices. We are what he calls 'choosing agents' (Williams, 2000: 20). But childhood is the period of life where we are still learning what it means to choose. Childhood is the *time* of freedom's 'indeterminacy', the emphasis on time signifying the formative nature of our identities which he wants to emphasise because it raises the question of the relation between freedom, and learning.

The time of indeterminacy is thus the 'growth' of freedom into an adult understanding of itself. How we understand and experience adult freedom thus dictates how children are nurtured, protected and educated in and by the culture and politics of a society. If childhood is in a state of crisis, which Williams thinks it is, then this tells us that we too have lost vital structures and ways of thinking about ourselves and our adult freedom. This has serious consequences for social and political relations.

But freedom for Williams, as we will see later in the thesis, is a far more complex and dialectical self-determination and experience than it might at first appear and so it is no surprise that he sees the problems facing childhood to be rooted in a wider suppression and distortion of the difficulties of the actuality of freedom. For Williams there is a 'cultural loss and cultural crisis' (Williams, 2000: 49) concerning our ability as individuals and as a society to know the relation between childhood, formation and freedom. If we do not know what it means to learn our freedom then we remain 'childish' adults, immature in our choice making and thus uncritical and passively consuming subjects. This would make us subjects unable to learn yielding a cultural life in which the immediacy of choosing operates without recourse to think its experience, its implications or the costs of choice.

It becomes, in other words, a worryingly abstract notion of freedom in which 'everything is permitted'<sup>6</sup>. It is of course a freedom without difficulty and so for Williams, without education.

Williams writes that we have 'lost patience' (Williams, 2000: 12) with childhood's indeterminacies., that we have become 'tone-deaf to the real requirements of children'<sup>7</sup> so that all we are left with is an uncertainty or even fear surrounding the time in which freedom tests and risks itself in the encroaching world of the adult. If adult freedom is not well educated then there are grave consequences for a society's ability to nurture those 'who are still learning their own freedom' (Williams, 2000:31). What we need, he argues, is a long term vision of what it means to be human, and therein social and political structures and institutions which can nurture an education in and for freedom. This at least will help us to recognise what is wrong in our perceptions of choice so that we find a perspective from which to ask difficult questions of societal structures and policies.

## Choice

One of the central aspects of this cultural crisis for Williams concerns the current rhetoric of choice in the West. Coupled with its arts of advertising the prevailing notion of choice presents us with an idea of freedom which has distorted what it really means to choose. And because the experience of making choices underpins all facets of social and political experience it is not surprising that Williams unpicks in so much of his writing how the rhetoric of 'the right to choose', choice understood as entitlement, mis-shapes our perceptions of things as individuals and as a society. This goes for the notion of parental choice in education, the 'right' of a woman to choose abortion or the right to die.<sup>8</sup>

The concern is that where choice is seen as the 'assertion of right' (Williams, 2000:13) we are being presented with a politically determined picture of choice 'which presupposes a blank will looking out at a bundle of options like goods on a supermarket shelf' (Williams, 2000:32). For Williams this is a most distorted idea of freedom because choice as 'entitlement', as the gratification of desires,

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<sup>6</sup> This is one of Dostoevsky's most famous lines in *The Brothers Karamazov* which we will say more about in chapter seven. In the novel it refers to a freedom without God. Here, it refers to a freedom without mediation, without the awareness of cost, limit and risk.

<sup>7</sup> Williams, R. 2009 Afterword to the report 'a good childhood: searching for values in a competitive age' [online] Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1153/full-text-of-the-good-childhood-report-afterword> [Accessed 12 December 2012]

<sup>8</sup> Williams has written on all three of these controversial issues. In chapter one of *Lost Icons*, where he writes about the rhetoric of a woman's right to choose an abortion, he argues that even given the most difficult moral considerations that must be taken into account, there is a 'simplifying of the notion of free choice into the terms of a purely individual good' (Williams, 2000: 45). And this is worrying because it suppresses the difficulty of thinking through the idea of the foetus as a real 'other', part of a system of relation that requires to be thought in terms of difference and recognition if there is to be a concrete notion of the human being. Williams' criticisms in the main here concern the suppression of the difficulty of thinking these ideas through.

becomes the 'right to compete' (Williams, 2000:30) and is seen as without risk. Choice is actually the experience of committing oneself, or one's body or one's capital within a whole system of exchange, of meaning and interaction. It is, he writes, to be a 'giver and receiver of meanings or messages, with all that this implies about limit and potential loss' (Williams, 2000: 24).

But freedom exercised in a vacuum without risk or loss, only serves to abstract the idea of freedom from its actual experience so that as it becomes more and more economically defined, and as adult desire becomes increasingly uncultivated because of it, so we, as adults, are less confident in knowing what it means to educate freedom from childhood to adulthood. The consequences of this are that the boundaries between adult desire and a child's, become disturbingly blurred.

Contributing to this trend is 'the excessive drive to co-opt children into the marketplace by intensive advertising' and our toleration of 'arbitrary violence in our entertainment that has a debasing effect on everyone's imagination'.<sup>9</sup> When this occurs in areas of deep economic deprivation, where there are limited safe and unpressured environments for play, and where the gratification of consumer desire is limited, we get a cocktail of experiences which foster a worryingly pressured and often hopeless environment for young freedom to be nurtured.

Real choice, he argues, 'both expresses and curtails freedom' (Williams, 2000:32) but whilst we live in a culture which sees freedom in the form of the abstract will, shaped in and by the world of advertising, then we 'lose the awareness that choice means loss' (Williams, 2000:38). This reminds us that, for Williams, the negations, limits and the costs of choice, in other words, the difficulty of making choices, are how we learn what choosing means. We are losing the awareness that 'we have to learn how to choose' (Williams, 2000:38). This goes back to the theme of difficulty and education. A culture which 'necessarily softens the elements of commitment and risk' (Williams, 2000: 23) is one increasingly without the resources to make the difficulty of choosing the *content* of a choice making and a self-aware freedom.

## The Play of Freedom

We know that play is the most formative experience of childhood, that it is the learning of language, of what things are and who we are. But in relation to this idea of freedom in Williams, play in childhood is a learning of what it means to be 'involved', to be part of a world of what he calls

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<sup>9</sup> Williams, R. 2009 Afterword to the report 'a good childhood: searching for values in a competitive age' [online] Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1153/full-text-of-the-good-childhood-report-afterword> [Accessed on 12 July 2013]

'negotiation'.<sup>10</sup> It is through play and through the cultivation of the imaginative life that we are able to discover 'by trial and error' (Williams, 2000:12) what it means to speak and to be heard, 'what I'm ready to answer for' (Williams, 2000: 12) in a world of others. In this sense play can also be 'difficult'. In fact, we might say, that it has to be difficult at some level because it is part of the turn towards the inner life, towards being an object to oneself in a certain way. I become aware of the experience of being an 'other', of being in relation. I become aware of the limits, risks and failures that one day I will have to take responsibility for. Williams is reminding us that how we learn to be human is always bound up with this difficulty and that to keep difficulty as something other to real freedom is to fail to understand its truth in relation to actuality.

Childhood freedom is the time of 'irresponsible talking, of fantasy and uninhibited role-playing, language without commitments beyond the particular game being played' (Williams, 2000:13). Children's literature, playground rhymes, even games that stray into the territory of the 'anarchic and amoral' (Williams, 2000:14) are a crucial part of the process of this learning because the child gets to 'try on clothes' (Williams, 2000:60) without the anxiety of having the game or the speech taken as fact.

It is interesting that Gillian Rose, who will play an important role in the work of Williams and Tubbs, makes a similar educational point in *Love's Work*. Play and fantasy, including the 'playing' with guns, violent toys and video games, 'teaches the difference between fantasy and actuality' (Rose, 2011: 126). Deny children the experience of 'playing' with aggression, emotions and inner conflict and they will 'be left paralysed by its emotions, unable to release or face them' (Rose, 2011: 126). To censor these experiences is to 'rub out in others the border that has been effaced' (Rose, 2011: 126) inside ourselves.<sup>11</sup>

It is this border between fantasy and actual experience that Williams finds being negotiated in the reading of good literature, and he includes here writers such as CS Lewis and Phillip Pullman.<sup>12</sup> The fantasy worlds of such writers take us on a journey which returns us to where we began, to our own

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<sup>10</sup>Negotiation is a key theme in Williams work. It appears as a theory of freedom most notably in his essays on Hegel which we explore in chapter six.

<sup>11</sup> Rose compares the censor here to the post-modern censoring of reason seen to be the 'destruction of modern life' (Rose, 2001:126). Likening its dethroning of reason she argues that they, like the 'sincere enlightened probity' (Rose, 2011:126) of the parent, 'proceed[s] as if to terminate philosophy would be to dissolve the difficulty of acknowledging conflict and of staking oneself within it' (Rose, 2001: 127). This however would 'leave us resourceless to know the difference between fantasy and actuality, to discern the distortion between ideas and their realisation' (Rose, 2011: 127).

<sup>12</sup> Williams took a particular interest in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* Trilogy when the books were first published. He engaged in a public conversation with Pullman in 2004 on the themes of the novels as well as on various related topics in the arts, literature and education. For a transcript of the debate see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3613962/The-Dark-Materials-debate-life-God-the-universe....html>

reality, only this time with it looking a little different. This experience of the beginning which is changed is really important within Williams' philosophical outlook as a whole because philosophical experience educates all of our beginnings. Fantasy, fiction and play in childhood are thus crucial elements for political and philosophical learning. Out of the otherness of fantasy, the imaginative life has 'learned to 'read' it [reality]' (Williams, 2000:17) differently. We achieve a relation to reality that marks the beginning of a self-aware thinking and this is what finally shapes us into becoming 'choosing agents, capable of answering for ourselves' (Williams, 2000:20).

We're looking at this because what matters for Williams is not so much what is learned in play and fantasy about things *per se*, but that the experience returns us to the temporal world of choice making and real experience. We are better able to make sense of it, able to risk it with more confidence. In other words, the imaginative life enables not an escape from the difficulties of human freedom but a deepened relation to its difficulty and this is nothing but a fundamental experience of learning.

## Choosing God

One of the many example that Williams gives of this distorted idea of choice, concerns the question of faith. We have seen that the ubiquitous rhetoric of choice is severed from the truth that it really means loss, limit, risk, but also relation. The freedom to choose is already to be 'involved' with others and therefore implicated in experiences not under our control, experiences which shape the conditions of the possibility of our choosing. Choice is a difficult middle between freedom and its experience of itself and the other. The severing of choice from actuality is also then just as problematic when it comes to our understanding of faith, particularly when faith is seen to be merely the assertion of will, the personal choice to believe , 'my personal Jesus'. He gives an example of this by quoting the statement of faith given in recent years by U2's Bono, who said, 'I'm not into religion. I am completely anti-religious. Religion is a term for a collection, a denomination. I am interested in personal experience of God' (Williams, 2012:85). Religion is seen by a secular West to compromise personal liberty in universal and moral principles of truth which cannot be true for all.

The 'spiritual' label in contrast to the religious, conveys a personal relation to the sacred which is seen to be much more in line with a modern or post-modern experience of truth. The problem of this, for Williams, is that it reduces faith to that which is generated by market choice alone, by what / understand. It misses the aspect of faith in which God is visible only within certain relations and thus

the actuality of loss and negotiation. The language of consumer choice is always a suppression of the difficulty of actuality.

The immediate concept of choice as we have explored it above in Williams, presents us with a picture of freedom in a vacuum, a freedom from otherness, from negotiation and from loss. Such a picture means that 'people are deceived about the nature of the choices they make' (Foster & Newall, 2005: 83) or in the language of *Lost Icons*, deceived about the nature of choice making itself. The philosophical and political issues raised for Williams by the rhetoric of choice however are many and beyond what the scope of this chapter that explore. But it is suffice to say that his examination of a whole host of landscapes of choice is rooted in a sociological and philosophical tradition which has also sought to discover the presuppositions of a modernity which is abstract and exploitative and fundamentally alienating in its thinking of freedom, history, culture, economics and politics.

## Truth

I want to turn now to the way in which Williams addresses the question of truth in his work for it is something which he sees to be necessarily bound up with the experience of freedom, difficulty and education. We will explore the philosophical underpinnings of this view later in the thesis. Writing at the time of the first Gulf war in 1991 before he became Archbishop, Williams, in the sermon 'What is truth?', (Williams, 1994: 127) gave an angry and focused response to what he saw to be the prevailing 'untruths' of the political justifications for war. In such a political arena, untruthfulness abounds so that peace is its 'first casualty' (Williams, 1994:127) of war. The consequences of such rhetoric were the 'slaughter of self and others' (Williams, 1994:127). Why? Because to justify war, and thus the inevitable casualties of war, is to have presupposed that one is free from the other about whom decisions are made. The other is always implicated in our freedom. Not only is there moral and physical damage done to the other in war then but we too are wounded. We cannot make decisions about the other, particularly from a position of power, without dialectical damage.

Untruthfulness occurs in the modern rhetoric of war in the belief that 'technological sophistication guarantees control' (Williams, 1994: 128), that military action makes way for diplomacy, that new modern warfare is discriminate. It led to the demonising of Muslims and to a highly suspicious view of Islam and the politics of the Middle East. The levels of self-deceit at work reflected the extremes of illusion that are always present in the way that the West thinks of itself in its freedom from the non-West. Untruthfulness resides, as he sees it, in all of the ways that we, as individuals or as a society, hold onto the illusion that the world is 'independent of my will... that I can clear an innocent space where the discharged arrow of my actions can fall' (Williams, 1994: 128). This would be to

eschew the difficulty of independence and relation to the other and so the actuality of the relation as one of learning. And whilst there is a culture of untruthfulness which masks the vision that we each of ourselves and the other, we cannot recognise its wider social and political grasp. One of these masks would be the notion of choice explored above. Chapter x will also explore the notion of the mask in modernity through a philosophical narrative of the veil in Tubbs.

The problem as Williams sees it is that Western modernity has yielded a social and political culture in which the self as autonomous individual, rationally sovereign and free is the supreme principle of freedom in a shared public life. The implications of it are that 'the world's untruth...does not touch me' (Williams, 1994:128) which means no possibility for a 'shared repentance' (Williams, 1994:129) for the fractured history and experience of humanity. As far as the violence and conflict of recent years are concerned, they are, for Williams, signs of a 'steady shrinkage of the world to the dimensions of the ego' (Williams, 1994:132). The language of war expresses this acutely in its 'self-referential' (Williams, 1994:132) rhetoric which he argues 'teaches us to forget the human particularity and strangeness of our enemy... to expect the worst from the stranger' (Williams, 1994:132).

But in what sense is this level of untruth to be unmasked for Williams? First of all, it is to recognise that the actuality of the freedom which we take for granted is already always one of negotiation. This is to remember what it was like to be a child, what it was to learn how to speak, act and make meaning by an encounter with 'the resistant surfaces of things' (Williams, 1994:129). We saw this above to be the experience of play and fantasy in childhood, the testing of identity and of relation to the world. If we are able to recall this environment as a negative one then the negative here is for Williams our recalling that the difficulty of freedom was something learned. This should begin to move us away from a picture of the self as a timeless identity of sovereign rationality. In this early sermon we can see Williams articulating what we have seen above to be the theory of childhood developed in *Lost Icons*. But it is more than just remembering. We might say that it is a 'recollecting' of childhood. We recognise something seemingly lost to adult eyes, or rather not yet learned and know that it is something of what 'difference' means; that I cannot give difference to myself, so that now, as then, I can see what is not 'planned and packaged by my ego' (Williams, 1994:129).

Recollection recognises where untruthfulness lives. He writes that it often begins when we are faced with the actuality of a difference which demands recognition. This can often be when 'I have damaged the difference of another' (Williams, 1994:129). But that, which interrupts our hold on things and brings us up against our actions, against what we cannot control, is the experience of difficulty and negation. This is what Williams calls 'the true teacher' (Williams, 1994:130). He is

drawn constantly to the idea that in the difficulty of recognising loss and vulnerability, *learning happens* and becomes an experience to be thought. It is not surprising that he is drawn to these learning experiences in others. But he is clear that the difficulty of such learning is nothing less than 'the struggle in the dark to avoid...[the] imprisonment' (Williams, 1994:130) of the choosing ego.

## September 11th

We can see similar arguments put forward by Williams in response to the decision by Western governments to go to war against the Taliban in the aftermath of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and then against Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2002. Williams was a key opponent and critic of military intervention as well as its rhetoric of the 'war on terror'. He was himself caught up in the attacks on the World Trade Centre being only two blocks away at the time. After the attacks he wrote a short reflection, *Writing in the Dust*, a religious response to the difficulties that people were encountering in their understanding of what had happened. It contains an articulation of the difficulties of thinking about the presence of God, the question of the other, political and religious evil and power. But by making known the tensions and the complexities involved in these questions, Williams makes them the substance of a reflection asked to think itself differently in relation to them. Even in this short essay Williams is commending an education in and for the difficulties that we encounter in thinking these questions.

There was in public life, he writes, a polarising of responses. On the one hand we saw the view that terrorism was something which had its roots in complex political and religious histories and actualities. Whilst on the other it was seen to be a purely political evil. The former lent itself on the surface to a certain uncritical anti-Americanism, whilst the latter failed to acknowledge the complexities of a psychology of murder and terror in its social and political forms. Such an essentialist view of evil for Williams tends to sidestep the necessary self-questioning which makes it possible to recognise something of the inescapably violent and risky nature of all human speech and action.

However, the polarising element of the debates in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, which saw liberal and conservative standpoints battling for moral supremacy, failed to properly address the actualities of violence and evil and the relations between power and powerlessness at work. The first step toward a more intelligent language - and we have seen this before in Williams - is that what appears 'natural', to be the facts of a situation, must be made an object of thought. This means that we should be 'very suspicious of any action that brings a sense of relief, irrespective of what it



achieves' (Williams, 2002:26). This only succumbs to the temptations for immediate solutions and shows a lack of patience with the process or the *time* of thinking.

Think the natural, achieve a relation to it and what we have taken for granted about the other is put into question, in this case, the Muslim other. The misconceptions that prevailed at the time betrayed an uneasiness across the religious and non-religious landscape about Islam in general, as the 'other' of the West, but also, within a western modernity in its secular forms, a suspicion about religiousness in general. He writes that we are frightened by a language which seems to rival what we now take to be the principle of modern universal rational freedom. There are of course, he says, marked differences between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The language of God in the latter is more ambiguous than that of Islam with its more direct language about God. And for many Muslims this makes Christianity 'too larded with irony or paradox' (Williams, 2002: 3) and too 'self-indulgent' making it prone to be 'absent' from what it actually says.

But he warns that we must acknowledge that all religious language has its dangers for it can easily distort our perceptions of reality. There are pitfalls to any natural standpoint – religious or otherwise which is why there is always a sense that our 'talking, seeing, knowing, needs a kind of cleansing' (Williams, 2002: 4), a cleansing, we might say, of the 'ease' of the natural. This is because the immediacy of vision and emotion carries a 'mis-seeing' on which we must gain a perspective. This shifts consciousness to a different level of self-awareness and so asks that we be uncertain, self-critical and doubting in a transition to the difficulty of thinking. In this unsettling are the conditions for the possibility of re-knowing the other. Uncertainty and the vulnerability that comes, not with the immediacy of fear, but with the loss of self-certainty, can be seen as educative.

Yet something about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> required a religious response if the question of the other and a politics of engagement was to be addressed. And so Williams asked what sort of response or recognition is possible in the face of the destructive acts of another. Can there be 'recognisable experience' (Williams, 2002:24). In other words, is there the possibility for what he has elsewhere called negotiation, beyond the immediate response which is merely reactive. A more intelligent thinking is one which 'probe[s] our desires' (Williams, 2002:25) to see if the experience of the other and of power and powerlessness can be understood as mediated experiences.

The war on terror was an immediate response which pledged violence against violence. The problem with this is that it betrays an uneasiness with actuality. Such responses require and work with seemingly innocent beginnings and ends that become confused, uncertain and implicated when we scratch beneath the surface. We begin from an act of aggression and terror, for example, the

overthrow of the Taliban regime with its aim to capture Osama bin Laden or to rebalance power in the Middle East in favour of more 'friendly' western alliances. But these ends become uncertain when the conflict sets in for the long term, when the bombing of military sites becomes the bombing of a country's infrastructure and its civilians, when military strategy includes the use of cluster bombs, indiscriminate killing and, as became clear, when the justification for war conceals national interests in oil. The 'principled' actions of a nation acting in self-defence becomes a morally questionable strategy leaving us bereft of a discourse for thinking law's relation to violence, more specifically legitimate violence.

The fear and insecurity which characterised the atmosphere in the US in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> showed, he writes, that the threat came from what had been deemed a geographical, religious and cultural 'other'. But he argues that such an other is able to be recognised and dealt with. When the other is an internal otherness and so bound up with one's own identity, an identity which defines itself in opposition to otherness, then it is less easily identifiable and hence less of a threat. Williams cites the Oklahoma bombings here as an example. But it is an illusion which prevents any real awareness of one's own otherness. Thus what 'represents the darkness and incomprehensibility that is within, the part of our own context and system that we can't speak to' (Williams, 2002:55) cannot be recognised.

In this Western mastery nations continue to build and sustain independence and power in relation to external others.<sup>13</sup> This is something Williams sees being shaped in and by the increasing disparities between rich and poor in a globalised context. But this means that there is a deep vulnerability at the heart of the globalisation process for those in the West. The increase in wealth for a minority at the expense of the majority inevitably generates a cycle of fear and thus political measures for self-protection and defence against perceived threats to its economic, cultural, political stability. The slave in the master's midst will be the cracks opening up beneath his feet. A more thoughtful approach to vulnerability is one which makes it visible so that we can at least begin to ask how to live with it in a way which is more than 'denial [or] panic' (Williams, 2002:61). This is a powerful argument for the educative truth of vulnerability in Williams and it is clear that such an education lies not in its being overcome but in its being thought and struggled with, in its being made the content of an independence and power which risks its truth.

Thus we can see that Williams is on the one hand speaking to 'us', the powerful West making decisions in response to what it deems other. But he is also speaking to what the West does not recognise about itself and that is its own powerlessness, its own other and its own dependency. We

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<sup>13</sup> The thesis will go on to explore the central place of the relation of master and slave in Hegel's philosophy.

could say that Williams is retrieving this other as the only education possible for the master. We will explore the implications of this further in Tubbs' educational reading of the master and slave relation in chapter five.

In *Writings in the Dust* Williams refers to the Sermon on the Mount in the context of master and slave. What does it mean when Jesus commands us to 'turn the other cheek and walk the extra mile' (Williams, 2002:27)? He writes first of all that it is far from being a picture of passivity or servitude which achieves no change in the power relation at play. Rather, the person who 'stands there rather than going away and slowly turns his head' (Williams, 2002:28) - the slave, the captured, the occupied, the Muslim, the one who says 'I choose to go another mile' (Williams, 1994:28) - undermines the master's frame of reference and says the world can be otherwise. It is not so much a 'choice' on the part of the slave here, for choice belongs to the master, but the 'work', we might say, to not 'simply reproduce what's been done' (Williams, 2002:20), the work 'not be a victim' (Williams, 2002:28). We might take this a bit further here and add that the one who is not master would be the one whose being other and nothing enables a truth to be discovered about the relation and about otherness that the master cannot achieve.

## The Breathing Space

If, for Williams, we choose to think the actualities of self and other in the experience of powerlessness then it is no surprise that he finds there to be an education in the utter chaos and powerlessness felt by so many ways during the events of 2001. But this is not for him to provide some sort of justification for loss, pain and fear. Rather, it is to say that the most difficult of human experiences take us to the depths of what it means to be a human being. To think the nature of these experiences somehow, to take the time to think them, is an education in and for itself. He calls this educative difficulty of the relation between certainty and uncertainty, power and powerlessness a 'breathing space' (Williams, 2002: 5) where 'room is made' (Williams, 2002: 5) for something more than what are our usual self-defences in relation to the world ordinarily understood.

But he acknowledges the difficulty of such language, particularly in the face of real horror and the pomposity and pious sounding nature of religious observations that say God is in suffering, in the cries of humanity, in the difficulty. In the end he says, our identifying of this 'making room' will always be lacking somewhat in conviction because God in these spaces is only actual in negation and suffering and so in prayer. We could just as much say then that *choosing* the difficulty of this education for Williams is a form of prayer. But he does not avoid the challenging question of who

God is and why he lets evil happen. To keep asking the question is somehow to keep the education alive and above all to put our trust in it.

For Williams, contradictions and paradoxes are the very stuff of human experience and teach us something about truth as mediated, as difficult, changeable and negative. At the most ordinary level of human interaction and knowledge we are aware of this, that the world we know and what we take to be true is far more fluid and dialectical than how it appears. Truth, for Williams, is not a commodity, a 'luxury', a thing that can be 'pigeonholed' (Williams, 1994:121) and bandied about but rather the 'iron rations' (Williams, 1994:127) of the soul arming itself 'against the disintegrative seductions that obsess us' (Williams, 1994:127). He writes in 'A Ray of Darkness' that language just does not 'keep up with the multiplicity and interrelatedness and elusiveness of truth' (Williams, 1994:118-9). But this is why we must do justice to its contradictions by not avoiding the paradoxes and uncertainties of modern consciousness. In fact it is paradoxical speech that 'keeps a question alive' (Williams, 1994:119) and truth for Williams is always the question that is 'left behind' (Williams, 1994:119) by its experience.

## A Ray of Darkness

This way of thinking about truth is what shapes Williams as a reader of the work and experiences of others. He seeks to do justice and witness to this very experience of being disrupted, unsettled and lost. He calls it the experience of being reorganised and it is out of those experiences which are not evaded and not suppressed, that Williams finds the 'poetic voice' (Williams, 1994:119), the voice, we could say, of difficulty made the content of a relation to the world and to others. He finds the great thinkers, writers and artists here and finds that their work teaches us something about the presence of God. As we will see in the thesis, Tubbs finds the student here. It is a negativity which Williams is so keen to draw our attention to because he sees it to be a 'ray of darkness' (Williams, 1994:119).

Loss and difficulty for Williams is the life of truth interrupting or negating a darkness of vision, in the sense that what we ordinarily see is limited. But also this interruption is itself a darkness for 'it may make me a stranger to myself, to everything I have ever taken for granted' (Williams, 1994:119). To experience truth in this way is to experience that 'I don't 'know' – and never did' (Williams, 1994:120). The paradox here is that in the awareness of truth we discover a truthfulness which has made us more confused. But it is the subtlety of these experiences that he work tussles with. He does so in a language at once difficult, because how can it not be, but pedagogically, and we might also say spiritually or educationally, nuanced enough to be recognisable to varying audiences. We will return to this question of pedagogy in the last chapter.

# Being Archbishop

## Women Bishops

I want to turn now to the difficulties that faced the Anglican Communion during Williams' time as Archbishop, particularly, the ordination of women bishops and the question of the validity of same sex relationships for clergy. Williams' role was to find a basis for holding together disparate provinces across the globe and their widely diverging beliefs concerning fundamental principles of Christian doctrine and practice. I will not rehearse his arguments here around these issues for they are of a complex ecclesiastical nature. But the issues posed significant questions for the Church and for Williams. Failure to reach some sort of agreement, a failure that might result in the breakup of the communion, would be a failure on the part of the church to nurture the deep levels of recognition that can be seen to underpin its life. The question of recognition has to do with how we know ourselves as free human beings and therein how we know the other. It goes to the heart of what we can say about human relations. And the underlying conditions for and relations of recognition is the spiritual life of the community. This is why one of the key issues for his handling of the tensions was how to do justice to the difficulty of recognition which meant doing justice to the *process* of dialogue and negotiation wherein this difficulty has its substance as an education for all. For Williams, the process itself nurtures and prioritises the conditions for recognition over temptations for unequivocal and one-sided solutions.

In 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting', Williams writes that for the majority of Anglicans who support the ordination of women bishops it is a contradiction to believe that a priestly calling 'to gather the community, advocate its worship and preside at its sacramental acts, where we learn afresh who we are',<sup>14</sup> embodied in the baptised life of particular service, can exclude any baptised person from the ordained ministry. If women are already ordained priests then it must also be seen that 'ordained ministry is one connected reality'<sup>15</sup> so that not to recognise women priests as bishops is to introduce what he called an 'unclarity' into the situation. But for Williams it was not just the outcome of the debates which shaped the church of the future. It was, he said, 'the way in which we discuss it and deal with the outcome'<sup>16</sup> which is also important. What matters is the 'character of intellectual

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<sup>14</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2654/> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

<sup>15</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2654/> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

<sup>16</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2654/> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

debate'<sup>17</sup> and the question of how the process of discussion might represent the actuality of a culture of power struggles, contradictory and divergent voices and practices.

The first thing such a process must do is oppose a culture of 'instant comment'<sup>18</sup> and of the need for clear and unambiguous answers. All legislation 'embodies compromise and unfinished business'<sup>19</sup> because the business of opposing views coexisting and functioning within a corporate life is messy, difficult and requires care and attention. If we refer back to what Williams has said about the nature of truth then we can see why it might be that Williams would want to do justice to the actual experience of these relations for it is a process which is able to carve deeper avenues of recognition through the struggles rather than out of them. Williams, however, was always aware that this meant the possibility of fracture beyond repair. But, and I realise that this is a bold argument to make here, when it is the truth of the negative which is at stake, the negative is what the experience of recognition carries and risks as its own truth. The experience of recognition is difficult, time-consuming and costly to oneself and the other because it undermines and potentially changes us in the actuality of recognition. This is why dialogue is something he takes great effort to articulate as part of the process of recognition.

## Leadership

Williams' leadership and authority was inevitably going to be a great strain – 'its a job of immense demands',<sup>20</sup> he said. His successor would need 'the constitution of an ox and the skin of a rhinoceros'.<sup>21</sup> For the conservatives in the church Williams was too much of a 'woolly liberal', to use a phrase that has often been used about him. Whilst for the liberals, he betrayed his more radical political views for a unity which ended up failing in respect of certain principles of equality and freedom. From both sides there was particular criticism of the philosophical foundations of his leadership and intellect, more specifically his conceptions of the negative or the dialectic in Hegel, which was seen to have shaped his understanding of church doctrine, particularly on the Trinity and on the notion of reconciliation, as well as having underpinned his practice as Archbishop. His

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<sup>17</sup> Williams, R. 2007 'How Religion is Misunderstood' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1751/how-religion-is-misunderstood> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

<sup>18</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2654/> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

<sup>19</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Women Bishops: Enough Waiting' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2654/> [Accessed 12 July 2013]

<sup>20</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Archbishop's Interview with Press Association' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2409/> [Accessed 24 July 2013]

<sup>21</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Archbishop's Interview with Press Association' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2409/> [Accessed 24 July 2013]

intellectual rigour in general meant, for some, that he was too much of a thinker to be Archbishop and would do better back in the realms of academia. For the most part these criticisms lacked any real philosophical knowledge by which to support their claims, something I try in the thesis to put right.

One of the most notable criticisms, certainly within the public arena, came from the Reverend Giles Fraser. Summing up wonderfully the problem of Williams as far as many in the church were concerned, he wrote in characteristically comic but astute fashion that 'the Anglican Communion is currently being tortured by a dead German philosopher'.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the truth was out. Williams and Hegel were now firmly established as partners in the running of the Church of England bringing a certain brand of dialectics to wreak havoc on disparate groups, leaving many frustrated by what Fraser called the 'politics of eternal negotiation'.<sup>23</sup>

However, on Fraser's understanding, Hegel's dialectics amounts to the experience of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, whereby 'human culture advances through a series of oppositions',<sup>24</sup> to a moment of resolution. The 'Canterbury' take on this, he writes, looks like this – 'take someone who believes that women ought to be bishops. Take someone who believes women ought not to be bishops. Put them in a room with flip charts and shake them all about, and you come out with a synthesis. Or a structured wholeness nuanced enough to contain what appeared to be contradictories. But you don't. What really happens is that you come up with a bodge and a room full of very angry Christians'.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, Fraser's view of Williams' Hegel is a far cry from what I will argue is Williams' actual reading of Hegel. The process of dialogue between diverse groups is not, for Williams, about achieving some *abstract* common ground of belief. Rather 'it is about finding the appropriate language in which difference can be talked about rather than used as an excuse for violent separation' (Williams, 2012: 291). As we will see in Williams' reading of Hegel later in the thesis, the dialectic challenges any simple definition of difference, identity, opposition or unity. Any encounter between self and other is a dialectically emerging relation of identity and difference, not fixed standpoints from which we can proceed to present our argument. In dialogue, which can therefore be nothing but difficult, challenging and negating, something of the truth of this emerges in and as the very *work* to sustain this difficulty. For Williams, truth has something to do with the process which requires that we risk losing ourselves, risk having no solutions to questions, but that we keep

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<sup>22</sup> Fraser, G. 2006 'Face to Faith' Guardian 17 June 2006

<sup>23</sup> Fraser, G. 2006 'Face to Faith' Guardian 17 June 2006

<sup>24</sup> Fraser, G. 2006 'Face to Faith' Guardian 17 June 2006

<sup>25</sup> Fraser, G. 2006 'Face to Faith' Guardian 17 June 2006

going because the difficulty, if it is learning, will find ways in which to proceed.<sup>26</sup> He was under no illusion that the costs of such a commitment to the negative would be extremely costly for those involved and risky for the church as a whole. But if this is where truth is seen to reside – in the difficult middle – then this underpins his insistence that we resist the temptations for one-sided or final resolutions which can only result in its destruction.

## The Arts and Education

One of the areas of Williams' work which bears witness to his thinking about the experience of difficulty is the Arts. We see in his reflections on music, poetry and literature the same complexities of thought and imagination that we have seen elsewhere, a complexity which tunnels deep into the questions of truth, God, human experience and the nature of the artistic life. As always, his writing provokes us into a struggle with these questions, but at the same time asks that we trust in what that struggle means. I will argue later in the thesis that this is the Hegelian notion of truth at work where the difficulty of the questions is made the substance of freedom itself as learning.

Concerning music, Williams writes that its relation to 'time', and we must remember the importance of time for Williams in the process of the forming of identity, makes it 'the most contemplative of the arts' (Williams, 1994: 248). We have to commit *our time* to it which makes music something that cannot be grasped in one moment. Meaning 'depends on its movement' (Williams, 1994: 248), a *time* which for Williams is also who we are and what we relate to in ourselves. Time, our time, is one of the aspects of the human that resists the merely mathematical or functional determination of reality and why, despite the fundamental relation between mathematics and music, there is also a great gulf between them in our experience of music for 'mathematical relations are timeless... but music keeps and is kept by time, and recognises *my time*, which is *my flesh and blood*' (Williams, 1994:248).

Hegel wrote in the *Aesthetics* that music's movement is the 'art of the soul' (Hegel, 1975:891), making resound 'the inmost self [which] is moved to the depths of its personality and conscious soul' (Hegel, 1975:891). And all because the material of music, a note, vibrating in itself, expresses the movement of time as a negation which sublates itself and becomes, as object, the life of subjectivity. This communicative element of music writes Hegel 'is carried by the inner subjective life' (Hegel, 1975: 891). The same sentiments are expressed by Daniel Barenboim in more recent years. He writes in *Everything Is Connected* that 'nothing exists outside time: there is an indivisible connection

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<sup>26</sup> This is akin to one of the attributes that Rose says you need to be a philosopher: 'that there may be no solutions to questions, only the clarification of their statement' (Rose, 1999: 42 )



in music, as well as in life, between speed and substance' (Barenboim, 2009: 15). This substance for Barenboim, as for Williams, has to do fundamentally with the human self for 'music is written and performed by human beings who express their innermost thoughts, feelings, impressions and observations' (Barenboim, 2009: 12). It must be given our attention, which for Barenboim and Williams is the combination of feeling, passion and reason. In this way our relation to music is one in which we are potentially learning, particularly for Barenboim and I suspect for Williams, if that music is difficult, for therein it speaks to and gives rise to the difficulty of modern freedom. For Williams, the act of listening to music seriously as well as playing it, is an experience of real freedom, but freedom crucially as 'service' for we give of our time 'freely' to an object – music - which is itself 'in its own right' (Williams, 1994: 250) and which commands the discipline of attention. This 'time' is then given back to us so that we know that we are changed. Once again, the experience is one of *learning* for 'we can't say *what* we have learned' (Williams, 1994: 250) only that we are now different.

Williams sees this depth of self-awareness and negativity across the world of the arts. Writing of Bach, he says that it is the drama of the music which draws us in, a drama which in the Passions particularly, is 'not a spectator sport'<sup>27</sup> but the experience of having to identify oneself with the characters, to 'take on a responsibility'<sup>28</sup> for events. This is a particularly difficult self-negation for a culture that so easily defines the self as not 'involved', not implicated in the experiences of others. With Bach's Passions we have to see ourselves, he says, 'as the blood-thirsty crowd'<sup>29</sup> and it can only be the most difficult education to have to see ourselves as complicit in events of which we were not a part.

Of Charles Dickens, he writes that we read an author of 'excess' in the sense that he asks us to imagine the 'excessive sense of what is human'.<sup>30</sup> Dickens 'loves the poor... from a sense of outrage that their lives are being made flat and dead'.<sup>31</sup> But the greatest of Dickens imagination for Williams lies in his ability to write the tragic. He 'writes about people in hell... in the hell of deceit and self-

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<sup>27</sup>Williams, R. 2005 'The Archbishop on Bach' Available at:  
<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2000/the-archbishop-on-bach>

<sup>28</sup>Williams, R. 2005 'The Archbishop on Bach' Available at:  
<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2000/the-archbishop-on-bach>

<sup>29</sup>Williams, R. 2005 'The Archbishop on Bach' Available at:  
<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2000/the-archbishop-on-bach>

<sup>30</sup> Williams, R. 2012 'Archbishops' address at wreath laying ceremony for Charles Dickens' Available at:  
<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2347/archbishops-address-at-wreath-laying-ceremony-for-charles-dickens>

<sup>31</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Archbishops' address at wreath laying ceremony for Charles Dickens' Available at:  
<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2347/archbishops-address-at-wreath-laying-ceremony-for-charles-dickens>

deceit... people who cannot live, literally, when their myths about themselves are destroyed'<sup>32</sup>. The enormous range of writings on poets and authors, including WH Auden, TS Eliot, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Murdoch, Bach, Keats, Kipling, George Herbert, testify to a rigorous insight into and commitment to what the imaginative life makes possible to see.<sup>33</sup>

## Being Alone

Perhaps we can say at the end of this chapter, that it is the actuality of modern freedom for Williams that is the primary theme recurring in his interventions. And we can say that subjectivity is a concept in his work which underpins and is underpinned by his understanding of difficulty. What does it mean to be a self, a human being in relation to the world and to the other and what sort of struggle is this for our knowing of truth and God. For Williams, it means that there is a fundamental experience of being human that we have to address at a very deep level indeed. This is the experience of 'being alone' (Williams 1994: 143).

But we are particularly good at running away from what it means to be lonely. This is a seemingly paradoxical point to make for someone whose philosophical and theological vision is about unity, communion, and a shared life. But to be committed to the universality of experience is to also know something of the 'disturbing fact of irreducible human isolation' (Williams, 1994: 143). Isolation constitutes the very sinews of a human experience of shared life, in and as the actuality of social relation which yields 'sudden clefs... gaps that open up with such stomach-churning unexpectedness' (Williams, 1994:143). When we speak and listen to the other, which is to participate in an arena in which we might be misunderstood, judged, misheard, we can find ourselves without words or articulateness and even find ourselves without the other.

The story of Jesus, for Williams, is the story which teaches us that solitude has something to do with truth. For Jesus is the reality of the 'Word exiled from the world of words and the compromises of definition' (Williams, 1994: 145). Jesus's solitude draws to its climax on the cross where there are no words, only 'a great cry' (Williams, 1994:144). There is only the truth that resists 'belonging' in the sense of being contained or possessed. God in the life and death of Jesus for Williams is the isolated self, the divine life which 'can communicate nothing but his presence and his inarticulate wanting' (Williams, 1994:145). God incarnate is only in this negative life of difference, loss, pain and

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<sup>32</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Archbishops' address at wreath laying ceremony for Charles Dickens' Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2347/archbishops-address-at-wreath-laying-ceremony-for-charles-dickens>

<sup>33</sup> For a range of his writings on these authors and poets see <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org>

vulnerability, the negations which are most profoundly the experience of being alone. But what loneliness reveals to us is the fantasy of a private world which takes itself to be a 'wholeness', in that it is 'sufficient in and to itself' (Williams, 1994: 145). Truth is rather in the relation. But this paradox reveals to relation also that 'there are things in each of us that cannot be made public' (Williams, 1994: 146). We can never achieve complete unity and openness with another. There are 'unbridgeable clefs in the social and relational worlds' (Williams, 1994: 146) and this is the sadness of the human condition.

Truth and loneliness are thus bound together. I think this is something for Williams of the necessity of the writer, thinker, lover and poet to be painfully lonely and often silent, which is no less a facing of the terror of silence and its truth. But, and here Williams' belief in this truth as education becomes clearer. Loneliness, he says, '*teaches* us about our truth; but it *teaches* us too that our truth is not our own...not to be grasped by us' (Williams, 1994: 147 my emphasis). This profoundly human sense of loneliness is, we might say, its own absolute education. Truth, seen in the light of Christ who was painfully human, is 'irreducibly not of this world' (Williams, 1994: 147). Something of this solitude is what we are witness to in Williams' writings and speeches, a truth which so deeply speaks to our own sense of difficulty and learning. It is something of his integrity as a writer and a reader that this truth is what he commits himself to in others.

## Conclusion

It has been the aim of this chapter to draw attention to the theme of difficulty in Williams' social and political interventions, and in particular to the way that difficulty in his work yields a notion of education. This is, I argue, something which becomes a significant dimension in his philosophical work requiring further explication if we are to understand it better. But this requires that we enter the world of Hegelian speculative philosophy. We could say that for the most part, criticism of Williams as Archbishop and as an intellectual revolved precisely around the importance that he placed on difficulty and contradiction. But I hope in what follows that the depth of his philosophical thinking of the negative and the speculative will help to make sense of this presence in his work.

## 2

# Tubbs: Philosophy and Education

## Introduction

The tone of this chapter is a little different. Whereas the very public work of Williams spans the landscape of philosophical, cultural, social and religious critique, including significant interventions into current political debates, the work of Tubbs takes us into different territory. This is not a work that intervenes in the same way. So what sort of work is it and what is its relevance for the thesis? I want to answer this primarily by drawing the reader's attention to two undergraduate degrees developed by Tubbs at the University of Winchester over the last twenty years. These are the BA (Hons) in Education Studies which began in 1992 and the BA (Hons) in Modern Liberal Arts<sup>34</sup> introduced in 2010.

The reason for this is that these two programmes provide the context for an understanding of the work of Tubbs as it will be explored in subsequent chapters. They allow us to get an overview of a particular philosophical and educational project which is important in relation to the educational dimension of the thesis as a whole. It is a project whose roots lie in a particular reading of Hegelian speculative experience by Gillian Rose. Moreover, it is the educational light by which I read the work of Williams.

The examination will take two parts. In part one I explore the philosophical underpinnings of the two degrees. This will point in the direction of the key themes in Tubbs which we will explore later in the thesis. These will be negative and speculative experience, first principles, recollection and, of course, education. In part two, the context that these two degrees provide is explored in relation to the educational journey of Tubbs himself. To this end I will root their vision and structure in an educational biography of sorts. This means going on a journey with Tubbs as a teacher. But more specifically, it means asking how it is for Tubbs that teaching and writing underpin and carry the substance of philosophical experience as education. This will be taken up more fully in the last chapter. However, I do not want to tell this story as a merely chronological one. Its importance lies, I suggest, in its being a journey of recollection and I am employing this term in the Hegelian sense in

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<sup>34</sup> Hereafter, MLA.

which it is understood by Tubbs.<sup>35</sup> Told as recollection it becomes the story of an education coming to know itself and how in doing so, it comes to 'name' its truth in a vision of and programme for higher education.

## Part 1

### Two degrees

As I write, the BA (Hons) Modern Liberal Arts degree at the University of Winchester is in its fourth year of study, having recently seen graduate its first cohort of students in 2013. The degree is at the moment one of only a handful of institutions in the UK and Europe with recently introduced programmes in Liberal Arts.<sup>36</sup> It can claim however, to be the oldest curriculum of higher education in the western European tradition, with its roots going back to antiquity. It became formalised in the medieval university of Europe in the curriculum of the Quadrivium and Trivium. The Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy) distinguished the mathematical domains of knowledge from the preparatory studies of the Trivium (Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric) which formed the basis of a liberal arts education. These were in turn underpinned by the study of philosophy, seen to be the unifying principle of all branches of knowledge which had the search for truth or first principles at their core.

But Liberal arts education is generally assumed today to be unique only to America where it has flourished over the last two hundred years. This is in stark contrast to its decline in Europe over the same period of time. The reasons for this are many and complex and do not need to be discussed in this chapter. But it means that the degree at Winchester is part of a growing interest in and re-emergence of liberal arts education once again in Europe.<sup>37</sup> Because the programme at Winchester is decidedly different however, in vision, content, structure and size,<sup>38</sup> than the current models that are being introduced in the UK which are following the 'major/minor' model as it exists in America, it

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<sup>35</sup> See chapter five

<sup>36</sup> Programmes in the Liberal Arts are increasing in the UK. Institutions following initially on the heels of Winchester were Kings College London, Exeter University and the Universities of Birmingham, Kent and University College London. There are as yet, no colleges of Liberal Arts in the UK.

<sup>37</sup> There seem to be two frameworks of discussion emerging concerning the place of liberal arts in Europe. The first mirrors the primary model of liberal arts education in America which sees students take a major ???/. the other model is in the tradition of the Great Books curriculum, studied at the smaller and more elite colleges in America such as St Johns in Annapolis, where students and teachers across the college read the great texts of the western tradition together in small seminar groups. For a recent discussion of the emergence of Liberal Arts in Europe see van der Wende, M. (2011) 'The Emergence of Liberal Arts and Sciences Education in Europe: A Comparative Perspective' in *Higher Education Policy*, 24. pp233-253

<sup>38</sup> MLA has a cohort of about 15 students a year in order to nurture a seminar environment which allows the reading and discussion of texts in small groups.

has something interesting to contribute to debates about the purpose of a higher education in and for the modern world.

This is due in the main to the Hegelian philosophical underpinnings of the programme and specifically its relation to the question of first principles, the search for which has always defined the substance of a liberal arts education. But before we explore this philosophical approach to MLA I want to draw attention to the Education Studies degree at Winchester out of which MLA emerged. This is because the history, philosophy and structure of educational experience in Education Studies, also Hegelian, provides the background and context for the emerging essence of the Modern Liberal Arts programme which followed.

## Education Studies

In 1992 Tubbs set up the BA Honours degree in Education Studies at what was then King Alfred's College Winchester with a cohort of seventeen students.<sup>39</sup> Its beginnings were fairly uncertain. This was first of all, because it was introduced at a time when the College was widening its undergraduate programme. It was unclear just how it would fit within this changing culture, particularly when Education Studies as an academic subject was not yet recognised in its own right, being one of only a handful of such degrees in the UK at the time. Second, there was no consensus yet within the College or the tutor team as to what Education Studies actually was as a subject. It was not a teacher training programme nor was it seen as a curriculum subject for P.G.C.E training.

In its first year, the curriculum was subject based, confined to traditional subjects of study such as history, philosophy and sociology. But after a re-validation and with a new team of tutors it evolved into a degree with a clear philosophical and educational vision behind it, a vision which even at this time understood that it retrieved 'a much more ancient and yet equally contemporary notion of education as a subject of study' (Tubbs, 2005: 16). This was the principle that education was an end in- itself or for its own sake. To understand education in this way was to understand that it had something to do with the *experience* of learning and therefore the experience that students on the degree would have of its content. It was through the selected themes and ideas to be explored over three years, combined with a philosophical and progressive structure of study, that this notion of experience was seen to hold its integrity as a higher education.

## Educational Experience

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<sup>39</sup> King Alfred's College became the University of Winchester in 2005.

Holding the programme together in terms of its content and structure was 'the relation between theory and practice' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 6). The rationale for this called upon a particular notion of experience in Hegel which argues that the experience of thinking about social, political, cultural, religious and historical relations is 'educational *in itself*' (Tubbs, 2005: 16 author's emphasis). For Education Studies, this meant asking a wider question. What exactly is educational about our experiences and our thinking of them? And in particular, what is the educational significance of our intervening in the world to transform social and political relations? The programme interpreted the experience of the relation between theory and practice as a philosophy of education, where the *difficulty* of the relation between theory and practice and of attempts to transform the world could be made the *content* of a higher education about that difficulty. This was aided by the introduction of concepts and themes from across a range of political, social, educational and cultural fields so that a student's experience of the contingencies of the curriculum and of their own social and political contingencies of that experience were formative. It is the contention of the thesis that this notion of difficulty as education goes to the heart of what Rose, Tubbs and Williams have to say about the absolute significance of speculative experience.

The programme then took social and political experience as its starting point and drew on Kant's distinction between "what is' (theoretical reason) and 'what ought to be' (practical reason)' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 6) as the immediate framework within which it could be made an object of thought. Grounded in cultural experiences of race, gender, inequality, justice and power, the fragmented nature of our thinking of these experiences became the content of a 'philosophy of cultural critique' (Tubbs, 2005: 17) or what, for Tubbs, was a dialectic of enlightenment around the areas of theory and practice that expressed the contemporary landscape of a student's experience.

For Tubbs, the substance of such a critique also retrieves the ancient and modern notion of education as social and political experience. On the one hand, he writes that it was what the ancients called *paideia*, the formative experience of the individual as the unity of the soul and the city. *Paideia* was 'the cultural life of the city, embodying its struggle with itself over its identity' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 7). On the other hand, he argues that such an education is *Bildung*, the *formation* and *re-formation* of social and political experience which repeats the oppositions between what is and what ought to be - even when it is critique - but which asks 'what is educational for us in our experience of actually doing this work' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 7). This relation between the two notions of education is the relation between the concept of experience in Kant and Hegel.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* it is experience, as the relation between 'sensibility, understanding and reason' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 14), which yields objective validity. But for Kant, the

contingencies of knowledge mean that knowing truth in itself is impossible. In Hegel however, experience is already the dialectical movement of truth in-and-for-itself or it is the relation between immediacy and mediation. The speculative stage of Hegel's philosophy is the result of this movement but not where the relation is overcome or suppressed, but rather, understood differently. It is, for Tubbs, the relation to the relation which does not suppress the fact that its own relation to the object is presupposed. This was to prove the guiding principle of the educational substance of the degree under Tubbs' leadership. It meant, and I realise this is a bold assertion to be making at this early stage in the thesis, that speculative experience in Hegel is the self-knowing spirit knowing itself in and as this learning. Speculative critique embodies the difficulty of dialectical experience as it returns to be the philosophical education of the learner about truth. We will explore this further in subsequent chapters for it underpins the philosophical thinking of Tubbs and Williams in their working through of what these notions of difficulty, truth and education mean in and for the modern world.

## Experience, Theory and Critique

The structure of the programme was designed around this three-fold model of speculative experience. Year one became the year of experience. Content and concepts are introduced as a way for students to reflect on their own 'educational autobiographies' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 4). Year two became the year of theory. Here, students are encouraged to mediate the thinking of year one through a deepened understanding of concepts. These might relate to race, gender, power or nature. It becomes 'a theorising and an experience about 'what is'' (Tubbs, 2005: 18). The impact of year two lies most notably with the experience that students have with the *difficulty* of theory and of the relation between theory and practice for 'they learn of the unintended consequences that accompany all attempts to mend the world' (Tubbs, 2005: 19). It is the year of the negative at its most unsettling. And compounding the experience of doubt and its attending vulnerabilities is that the student's own voice is subsumed in the 'discipline' of theoretical work, of 'intuitive or imagine understanding' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 10). Theory is not confined to the academic disciplines *per se*, but introduced as contribution to the educative experience itself. This approach to theorising crosses all of the modules in year two despite varying in content and teaching styles.

By the time that students are eager to speak and to reflect more deeply on the difficulty that continues into year three the now informed voice returns as critique. And 'applied to matters of personal and social interest' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 10) year three is where theory finds itself 'as practice' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 10). This becomes a powerful education for some students who having experienced the difficulty of the relation between theory and practice learn that 'this



essentially aporetic experience' (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001: 12) has meaning as something educational. It is no surprise that one of the last modules in year three taught by Tubbs before his move to MLA was called 'Know Thyself', a module which gave students the opportunity to engage with and speak through those thinkers who have struggled to understand dialectical experience as formative and meaningful. Content included Hegel's master and slave dialectic, Kierkegaard, and Van Gogh, read as a life lived painfully within the experiences of joy and sorrow. Year three, it could be said offers philosophical insights as the *substance* of negative experience and critique. It brings the three years together into a journey which comes to understand itself as the substance of life lived in the difficulty of modern social and political relations.

One of the questions that raised itself in relation to the degree and to year two in particular however, concerned the ethical implications of teaching for doubt and for uncertainty. For year two is the experience of Hegel's famous 'pathway of doubt', the year of the negative when theory seeks to unsettle and uproot preconceived notions. For some students, this can be particularly difficult if it means being unsettled in their idea of God, freedom, totality or the nature of social and political change. What sort of negative education it is and the level of responsibility required with such an intervention were serious questions for the degree and its tutor team.

We can liken the criticism of such an approach to Kierkegaard's criticism of Socrates. For Kierkegaard, Socrates asked questions 'without any interest in the answer except to suck out the apparent content by means of the question and thereby to leave an emptiness behind' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 36). In doing so 'he placed individuals under his dialectical vacuum pump, pumped away the atmospheric air they were accustomed to breathing, and left them standing there. For them, everything was now lost' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 178).

For Tubbs however, the negative education offered by Socrates and his relentless commitment to the negative, has, in the relation between Kant and Hegel, a different and modern educational foundation. The importance of this in relation to the educational thinking of the degree is that 'students are offered the chance to make their own difficulties the content of their studies without sinking into the merely reflective' (Tubbs, 2005: 20). This is the difference that negative experience makes when it is education.

But it is also much more than this. In a particularly Hegelian argument, he asserts that 'in the experience in which (critical) philosophical consciousness contradicts (abstract) natural consciousness and knows itself to be spirit as the relation of their misrecognition, there is a notion of the absolute or the true: namely, the relation of philosophy and education known in and for itself'

(Tubbs, 2005: 20). Whilst this contains a number of difficult ideas that we have not yet explored - spirit, the absolute, misrecognition, education as a first principle - we can at least see that the vision that Education Studies began with and the substance of its evolution under Tubbs as programme leader, was nothing less than an idea of truth as philosophical and educational experience. But he writes that 'it [learning] asks no more and no less than that students have the courage to risk further experiences, to seek more learning by asking more questions, *and* that they recognise the substance that inheres in such work' (Tubbs, 2005: 20 author's emphasis). This was an extraordinary and bold vision for a programme of higher education. It is now discovering its speculative truth in and as a modern liberal arts education.

## Higher Education and the Church College

Before we go on to describe the MLA programme in more detail, it is important to mention that the success of Education Studies is due in part to the support and understanding given to Tubbs by King Alfred's college and the University is continuing to give strong support to MLA at a time of great uncertainty in higher education.

In the late nineties, the college began to engage with wider debates on the purpose of religious institutions of higher education in what was an increasingly secular and pluralist society. In 'For and of the truth: upbuilding higher education in church colleges', Tubbs went to the heart of this debate by addressing the relation between religion and philosophy in church colleges where he argued that an engagement with the speculative philosophical tradition could contribute to the college's search for distinctiveness as an institution of higher education. This speculative tradition, he argued, offered a way to re-think what is actually 'higher' about education and by doing so retrieve religion's relation to philosophy as the educative work of the single individual. It would mean, he argued, that a church college would need to be asking different sorts of questions of itself than were currently being posed. The prevailing dilemma was as follows: If religious colleges offer an education 'into Christianity' then 'they threaten academic freedom' (Tubbs, 2003: 55). If they 'teach about Christianity' they 'relativise their truth' (Tubbs, 2003: 55). What these questions missed, he argued, was the most important question: 'what exactly is education, and more specifically, what is the actual educational and formative component of a higher education?' (Tubbs, 2003: 55). Central to this, was the question that must be asked by the teacher; 'how does my knowledge become formative for another' (Tubbs, 2003: 56).

What the speculative comprehends for Tubbs is that 'our learning about truth occurs in and through the phenomenology of aporetic experiences of the conditions of possibility'(Tubbs, 2003: 53) or of

first principles. Kant moved the question of first principles toward the speculative when he concluded that 'the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience' (Kant, 1968: 194). But for Tubbs it is the philosophical experience of the contingencies of the conditions of possibility that commends an education about truth in and as aporetic experience.

As far as the church college is concerned, this notion of higher education can retrieve the tension between philosophy and religion which has always defined the tradition's search for truth, as one of learning. And the added significance of this for Tubbs, is that it retrieves the political imperative of religious education. It shifts the vision of a college away from seeing education in 'what' is taught to the way that a student experiences their own contingency within social and political relations through the 'contingency of the curriculum' (Tubbs, 2003: 56). It is interesting to note, that even at this time, it was the 2500 year old educational tradition of Western Europe as a tradition of 'know thyself', which was embodied in the curriculum of a liberal arts education, that was being retrieved by Tubbs in a concept of religious higher education<sup>40</sup>.

## Modern Liberal Arts

I want now to describe how Modern Liberal Arts shapes and deepens the speculative approach discussed above. It does this in relation to the ancient and medieval search for first principles. As the evolution and success of Education studies gathered momentum, reaching at one point a cohort of one hundred and fifty students, Tubbs stepped down from being its programme leader in order to devote more attention to teaching and writing. The period from 2008 saw a sustained and rigorous output of work by Tubbs on the relation between philosophy and education as well as further readings of the philosophy and educational substance of thinkers from Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, al-Farabi and Avicenna, to Kant, Nietzsche and Hegel through to Derrida, Foucault and more recently Henry Corbin and Žižek.<sup>41</sup>

But during this time it became clear to Tubbs that the success of the degree was having an impact on its ability to hold to the essence of the Hegelianism underpinning it. And what was emerging in his writing was the search to name this essence as it had been known in the tradition. We might say that

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<sup>40</sup> I am not suggesting that Tubbs' work is religious in nature or that the degrees at Winchester are religious. In fact, it is the philosophical/speculative notion of education that they work with that takes religious and secular questions about truth, God and the human condition to the philosophical as a higher education about those questions.

<sup>41</sup> In 'A return to Hegelian Education', a chapter due to be published in 2014 in 'Žižek and Education' Tubbs explores what he sees to be the most educationally speculative reading of Hegel since Rose, by Žižek in his book *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*.

Tubbs was seeking a way for the experience of education to be its own substance. This, as will become clear in the thesis, is a beautifully Hegelian move. When it became clear that the essence of Education Studies had a liberal arts tradition behind it, it was to the purpose, philosophy and underpinnings of this tradition that Tubbs turned as a way both to respond to the challenges facing higher education in the wider political climate and as a way to re-think and retrieve this ancient and mediaeval philosophy of higher education.<sup>42</sup>

Modern Liberal Arts began in earnest in 2010 with sixteen students. It currently has a small team of tutors who teach a variety of content centred on the philosophical outlook. This content revolves around core modules in each semester of each year called 'Freedom (is to learn)'. Other modules range from: First Principles, the Fall and Utopia and Tragedy in year one, to Music and Philosophy, Holocaust Education, Life and Death and Devils in years two and three. The programme is primarily concerned with 'ideas' and this gives it the freedom to bring in concepts and content from any discipline as a tool for thinking about wider political, philosophical and cultural questions.

Regarding the philosophical rationale for the programme, it emerged in large part from Tubbs' Hegelian reading of the history of western philosophy. In this reading, he argues that there is a recollective logic to the history of western philosophy. It is a logic that we can comprehend as the history of a relation - that between thought and truth in-itself. To look behind the content of this history as it is usually presented chronologically is to 'search for the conditions of the possibility that sustain it' (Tubbs, 2009: 1). It is therefore, in the death of metaphysics in a post-foundational age, a retrieval of the search for first principles in and for the modern aporetic mind.

He finds two relations and two logics at work. These are the relations of 'life and death and metaphysics and social life' (Tubbs, 2009: 1) which become Neoplatonic and aporetic logic. We will not rehearse these arguments here suffice to say that for Tubbs, these two relations and logics are the history of the education of the relation between thought and the true. The history of western philosophy presupposes the Neoplatonic logic of first principles which are the 'condition of the possibility of the principles by which thought works and by which it investigates itself' (Tubbs, 2009: 3). This is significant for Tubbs because truth which is taken to be in-itself is at the same time the positing of the contingencies of thought and thus the experience of doubt, mediation and

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<sup>42</sup> The framework within which current educational discourses are embroiled repeats the ancient and medieval question of instrumentalism in education versus the idea of education for its own sake. These debates are framed more markedly when set against a backdrop of a global financial crisis and the rise in tuition fees in the UK in 2012, as well as the growing concern for the future of the Humanities in higher education generally in the west.

contradiction as error. For Tubbs however, recollection, and we will explore this later to be the Hegelian notion of recollection as understood by Tubbs, learns that this logic is an educative one.

Along with Kant's Copernican revolution and Hegel's notion of experience, Neoplatonic logic becomes the *aporetic* logic of the modern mind, which 'offers a fundamental re-education about this relation of truth and thought' (Tubbs, 2009: 3). This is why he makes aporia in his work and in his teaching its own substantial education about first principles. In fact, aporetic logic retrieves and redefines the search for first principles in and as a 'logic of philosophical principles' (Tubbs, 2009: 3). He argues this to be a journey of 'recollective learning' (Tubbs, 2009: 5). Modern Liberal Arts in its structure, content and teaching is attempting to make the aporetic logic of modern social and political consciousness, substantial in-and-for-itself in a process of learning. The degree commends that thought know itself in the truth of negative experience. This is undoubtedly a most powerful and bold education, and indeed a risky one, in that it asks that we comprehend truth in the other, in God and the truth 'of the other in the self' (Tubbs, 2009: 5). This is the aporetic mind which has it groundless ground as both form and content and so as an experience which is formative.

There are three relations to the true that Tubbs explores in *History of Western Philosophy*. These are the natural relation, the social relation and the metaphysical relation. Each relation presupposes that truth is in-itself and that thought is error in relation to truth. It is the latter relation that Tubbs takes up in the book and what we will concentrate on here in relation to the degree, for it is the educational logic of first principles on which, for Tubbs, the history of western reason rests and recollects itself.

## First Principles

The search for first principles defined the study of the liberal arts from their beginnings in antiquity.<sup>43</sup> The fundamental principle of Aristotelian logic says that 'the truth of what is cannot be otherwise' (Tubbs, 2009: 22). We see this at the beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He writes that 'all men by nature desire to know' (Aristotle, 1984: 1552, 980a), whether it is through and of sense experience, or sensuous knowledge with a view to right action. But a knowledge raised above the particularities of sense experience, above the knowledge which cannot 'tell us the 'why' of anything' (Aristotle, 1984: 1553, 981b) is that which 'deal[s] with the first causes and the principles of things' (Aristotle, 1984: 1553, 981b). This enquiry into the truth of knowledge is the tradition of

metaphysics, the science of the first principles by which 'all other things come to be known' (Aristotle, 1984: 1554, 982b). Aristotle called metaphysics 'the most divine science' (Aristotle, 1984: 1555, 983a) because God is a first principle and all other sciences are subordinate to that which 'deals with divine objects' (Aristotle, 1984: 1555, 983a). Philosophy therefore is 'knowledge of the truth' (Aristotle, 1984: 1570, 993b) in contrast to *phronesis* or the knowledge with a view to right action.

At the root of this science is the knowledge that 'it is impossible for anything at the same time to be and not to be' (Aristotle, 1984: 1588, 1066a). But this means that there cannot be 'a demonstration of absolutely everything' (Aristotle, 1984: 1588, 1066a) for demonstration proceeds by the relation and contradiction thereof of cause and effect. There must be a first cause to prevent the errors of 'infinite regress' which can never get to the truth of what is, as non-contradiction. Tubbs writes, 'infinite regress explained nothing, but its usefulness is in proving the logical need for God as the explanation of everything' (Tubbs, 2009: 23).

The Aristotelian logic of truth as non-contradiction, argues Tubbs, yielded the principles by which the other sciences carried out their enquiry. For the 'deduction and demonstration of things' (Tubbs, 2009:22) logic is 'grounded in the object' (Tubbs, 2009: 22) and for induction, the object is 'defined according to the principles' (Tubbs, 2009: 22), to logic. In both cases logic becomes the 'instrument' by which knowledge is discovered and justified. This logic is tautological in that the 'thing yields the principle and the principle yields the thing' (Tubbs, 2009: 22). But logic does not think itself here. It does not think itself dialectically because the dialectic cannot be a principle. In Aristotle, it has no way for dialectical experience to be its own 'universal form and content' (Tubbs, 2009: 22). Logic is thus abstracted from the conditions of its own possibility as a first principle and this becomes in the Neoplatonic tradition a prejudice against logic as being able to get hold of first principles. We see the separation of logic from metaphysics, entrenching the view of truth as an unknowable in-itself. Logic becomes scientific 'method' and underpins the practice of philosophy for the next two thousand years.

But Tubbs argues that the tautology of the principles of a deductive and inductive science becomes an ambivalence posited as error in opposition to the certainty that truth is what is, and not what is other than itself. The metaphysical relation to first principles is raised to the study of causes and principles alone. In the scholasticism of the mediaeval world, metaphysics had distanced itself from the object to such an extent however that it was seen to be an obscure and superficial practice of a few learned men. It made a claim for sovereignty over abstract logic because metaphysical logic concerns itself with 'non-contradiction, the necessity of a first cause, and the obvious absurdity of

infinite regression' (Tubbs, 2009: 23). Truth is the principle that 'what is, is itself' (Tubbs, 2009: 23) and it is without division or negation and so is the eternal self-sufficient principle. This is an important point to remember because Tubbs is drawing our attention to the way that the gap between metaphysical truth and its being experienced is worked through by Aristotle and how the experience of the ambivalence of this relation is subsumed or posited as error in relation to metaphysical truth in-itself. The study of first principles becomes the way that metaphysics resolves this error because first principles contain no division and no error. This logic was also the logic of a principle of learning as an end in itself, 'uncorrupted by contingency, privation or change caused by an other' (Tubbs, 2012: 4). It constituted the education of the free man or the leisured gentleman who lived an independent life of learning as opposed to the dependent life of work. The truth of the work of the craftsman, for example, is only 'in the product made or performed for the sake of another, his work has no meaning in itself' (Tubbs, 2013: 444). This defined the artist as merely a mechanic in opposition to the truth of freedom. Tubbs argues that it was the search for the first principles of 'truth, nature and freedom' (Tubbs, 2011: 1) that defined the notion of an education in-and-for-itself in antiquity or what he calls a 'metaphysics of education in-and-for-itself' (Tubbs, 2011: 1).

In the separation of logic from metaphysics in the Aristotelian religious and philosophical tradition (Christian, Judaic and Islamic) however, the metaphysical relation becomes what Tubbs calls a 'culture of error'. It is now the experience which now shapes how error and moreover, negation and contradiction, are understood and reproduced. But as 'cultures' they carry the educative significance of the experience of thought as error in contrast to what he calls the 'errors of culture'. These marked the repetition of the positing of contradiction and negation as error, without the awareness and thus re-formation of error as formative. Tubbs explores the historical cultures of error which come to see experience in all of its negations and contradictions, as re-forming for the 'mind that is experiencing them' (Tubbs, 2009: 25) and thus for the way that truth is known. This is why 'the culture of error speaks of the education carried in the error of culture' (Tubbs, 2009: 25).

When the in-itself of Neoplatonic logic reaches the time of the Renaissance, the relation of thought to truth in-itself struggles with truth being for another. The 'for another' seeks to assert itself over the metaphysical in-itself. It 'marks the slave-revolt against the ancient view of the craftsman' (Tubbs, 2013: 445). Tubbs cites Leonardo da Vinci as the most notable exponent of this revolt. The argument centred around the notion of the artist as more than just a mechanic. The artist in his direct relation to nature took himself to be the experience by which meaning or truth in-itself was accessed.

By the time of the Enlightenment this logic turns in on itself and we find that the slave or the for another of the in-itself 'is now true because the truth of everything lies in being for another, i.e. for-reason' (Tubbs, 2013: 445). Reason is now truth. But this becomes its own dialectic of enlightenment for it finds that it cannot speak of its own truth as an in-itself without contradiction. But it is precisely this dialectic of enlightenment which re-forms the metaphysical relation because truth in-itself is re-formed. This in turn reforms the relation that we have to nature and to freedom. Metaphysics in modernity is now 'the logic of its own instability' (Tubbs, 2011: 8) and self-relation and this produces what he calls 'the 'culture' of modern reason' (Tubbs, 2011: 8) which is reason 'formed and reformed precisely in expressing itself' (Tubbs, 2011: 8).

At the heart of the argument that he makes here for a reformed metaphysics is that it is now possible to recognise 'that the social relations and the logic which characterised this search for first principles have been transformed in and by modernity' (Tubbs, 2013: 5). We are now able to redefine its logic. In Aristotle's world the logic which distinguished the in-itself and the for another, carried relations of master and slave. Only the free man could pursue first principles because only thought which is truly 'free' - self-sufficient, independent and in-itself – can contemplate truth in-itself. This social relation carried in the definition of *liberalis* is what underpins the charge of elitism levelled at liberal arts education today which is still seen to presuppose a hierarchy of intellectual pursuit for its own sake over and above a skills based education.<sup>44</sup> But this is why a notion of culture holds particular educational significance for our modern relation to first principles because it is a philosophy of the history of freedom read as a philosophy of the education of freedom.

The relation of master and slave that we find in Aristotle is now reformed by itself as a logic of self-opposition. Central to this argument is Tubbs' reading of the experience of the Kantian and Hegelian mind which gives modernity the mediated life of truth in -itself and thus its culture of re-formation. The significance of this for a modern notion of education is that we are able to ask in what sense we are now master and slave, and therefore for Tubbs, in what ways we are complicit in the social and political relations we seek to reform. We are also able to ask what the master and slave relation now means for our understanding of self and other, God and man, life and death. It is no coincidence that Hegel's master and slave dialectic is the central and recurring theme of the degree. It is also the lens that shapes the whole of Tubbs Hegelian educational project for the master and slave relation is, as we have above, presupposed by the relation of thought to the in-itself. This means that the language of truth is the historical language of the master in various shapes of relation to what it deems as other and thus for another. Only with its enlightenment does this master come to know the slave as



self-relation, even though, argues Tubbs, this is only the beginning of new forms of misrecognition about what this means for it.

## Liberal Arts and Elitism

One of the main challenges that a liberal arts education has to face today is that it is seen to be elite, uncritical, imperialist and outdated. The definition *liberalis* traditionally meant the freedom of the gentleman. But this is not an idea of freedom that we can understand or work with today. Martha Nussbaum has been one of the most outspoken critics of its elitism in her case for a liberal arts education centred in and for a modern multi-cultural and democratic society. A pluralistic approach, argues Nussbaum, engages with the texts, ideas and histories of other cultures traditionally deemed outside of the culture of the leisured elite and their study of the books of the western canon. This latter model is antithesis to 'what is finest in our democratic educational traditions, which have been built on ideas of equality and mutual respect' (Nussbaum: 1997: 295).

Tubbs response to the question of elitism and the study of the texts of the western canon on the degree is different. A re-formed notion of truth can retrieve the search for the first principles of truth, nature and freedom for the modern world precisely because it knows the social and political presuppositions which underpin its questions. It carries the ambiguity of this knowledge as content for experience. On the degree it looks as follows.

Content is given in each year 'associated with the search for first principles' (Tubbs, 2011: 19). But, and here is the crux of Tubbs' argument for a modern liberal arts, the difference between old liberal arts and the new is that now it is an 'education in-and-for-itself...characterised by a culture of openness to itself as a culture' (Tubbs, 2011: 19). Its search for the first principles of nature finds the culture of reason in the Quadrivium subjects which opposed the macrocosm and microcosm. It finds the culture of reason in the oppositions determined as social and political experience and in the idea of a freedom which takes itself to be autonomous and independent. And in the search for the first principles of truth, metaphysics is now retrieved in and by a culture of reason which knows itself to be the 'actuality of the logic of first principles' (Tubbs, 2011: 18).

What Tubbs means by this is that when the modern aporetic mind thinks itself in and as the culture of reason it recollects actuality to be the educational logic of thought in relation to truth in-itself. Most importantly, this is where the concept of modern freedom 'appears as a first principle' (Tubbs, 2011: 19) to itself. The idea which modern society has of its freedom is for Tubbs always a master and slave relation of some sort and expresses the health or otherwise of its educative life, for the shape of self-relation will define how open it is to 'its own untruth' (Tubbs, 2011: 20). The integrity of

this higher education of freedom lies in its commitment to such a risk and the difficulty therein. By putting the question of master and slave at the heart of the MLA degree Tubbs is making the argument that it is the substance of a critique whereby critique finds meaning as learning in and as the dualisms it finds itself repeating.

## Work in Progress

Due to the fact that modern liberal arts as a concept of education is still being thought through and developed, the thesis can only comment on aspects of a much wider set of arguments which are only introduced in his more recently published articles. These arguments are a work in progress but my understanding is that they are taking a specific direction into articulating a concept of humanity in liberal arts education. This is revolving around a notion of modern metaphysics which argues, in the terms of the core modules on MLA that freedom *is* learning.

It is the question of humanity retrieved in and for a post-modern world sceptical of such ideas. It is, he argues, an important question for any integrated approach to a modern humanities curriculum. But it is also more than this. At the end of *History of Western Philosophy*, in the passages on self and other which explore the master and slave relation of ancient, mediaeval and modern social relations, there is an implicit concept of humanity being pursued in relation to the theory of modern metaphysics. It is a notion being thought through within the Hegelian logic of recollection, where humanity is able to recollect itself as the relation of self and other 'in the aporetic logic and content of the modern mind' (Tubbs, 2009: 148). Tubbs also extends this argument to the relation between the West and its others.

But the questions arising out of this have forced Tubbs into thinking about the concept of humanity and the '*studia humanitatis*' in relation to higher education. The relation of self and other is of course implicitly a theory of humanity but not of 'all' humanity. It is rather, the relation by which the West comes to understand itself in relation to its idea of humanity. But the difficulty this presents us is that learning might be the only work and truth possible for a modern freedom or a modern concept of humanity.

But what are the implications of this? Is the work of learning really good enough? What difference does education actually make? Perhaps we can say that for Tubbs the difference made is that the master or the West goes to the other with a different frame of mind, that revolution can only have its truth as learning. But this is a huge challenge to philosophy, theology and politics alike when it comes to the question of justice. Maybe all we can say at this point is that for Tubbs, education is the risk that humanity must make in the face of radical demands for social and political change. It

might be the risk that education always asks of itself, a risk because it is also the most difficult and the most painful of lessons. But what this education might look like is something the thesis as a whole will unfold in and as the relation between all three of its thinkers.

The modern liberal arts programme at Winchester can, for Tubbs, offer a way to renew the search for an idea of humanity. On the one hand this can be seen as a retrieval of a notion of humanism. But it would be one able to carry the ambiguities of the modern philosophical mind. Liberal arts, he writes, was always the 'philosophical self-education of the human being' (Tubbs, 2013: 4) and something of this can be seen in the following. He writes:

'Bring the *studia humanitatis* and the idea of *humanitas* to this modern metaphysics of liberal arts education. Let literature, old and new, speak its contradictions with regard to truth, and let students learn of the meanings of these experiences within the experiences of modern metaphysics. Explained in this way, the humanities are engaging with the idea of first principles, including the first principle of being human: humanity... Combining humanities with the philosophy of know thyself is the experience of the modern higher education that is an education in-and-for-itself; open because unstable, and speaking a modern truth about lives lived within local, national and global imperfection' (Tubbs, 2013: 10).

For Tubbs, there is now an explicit invitation to all parts of higher education to 'recollect itself within the principle of formative human education' (Tubbs, 2013: 5). But this means working with a notion of recollection as the philosophical experience which comprehends the actuality of freedom from within the dualisms characteristic of modernity. This can be nothing but a great risk for abstract consciousness. It is an idea whose seeds were in the early work of Tubbs. In *Contradiction of Enlightenment* he writes that 'education is the risk which freedom demands' (Tubbs, 1997: 184). Formulating the argument for what this means for liberal arts characterises the direction of Tubbs' work at the moment, too late for the thesis, but, ideas which I hope, will be pointed too as the thesis unfolds.

## Part 2

I want to end this chapter by casting a different light on the philosophical and educational projects that we have discussed so far. In what follows I will present something of the educational journey of Tubbs himself. This is because the educational notion of *aporia* that he works with as a teacher and that underpins the speculative structure of MLA works with a notion of recollection that also has its truth in and as the recollective life of Tubbs himself. To see the degrees and the teacher in the

context of Tubbs' personal journey is to see how, in each stage of Tubbs' life and work, education has recollected itself and 'named' itself as a higher education.

This raises the question of course, whether these degrees are nothing but the project of an Hegelian philosopher making his own educational experience that of others. This is always the risk of anyone who intervenes, never more so than in the field of education. We can find an echo of this in Isaiah Berlin's criticisms of Plato and the philosopher kings. It would seem, he writes, that in order to be truly free and rational 'I must obey those who are indeed rational, and who therefore know what is best not only for themselves but also for me, and who can guide me along lines which will ultimately awaken my true rational self and put it in charge, where it truly belongs' (Berlin, 1999: 63). He goes on, 'there is no despot in the world who cannot use this method of argument for the vilest oppression' (Berlin, 1999: 64). This raises an important question for the teacher about the right of education to intervene. But this is a question that Tubbs as a teacher takes very seriously and so we will return to explore it further in the last chapter. At the moment we can say that for Tubbs, what changes as education is the learner herself because the work she does has its own truth and meaning as learning. The educational journey, with all of its doubts, contradictions, negations and vulnerabilities, becomes for her, subjective substance. We will say more about this in later chapters.

Tubbs' educational biography can be understood then to be not only the form and content of the degrees as they have re-formed themselves over the years but also the form and content of the life of Tubbs as it has learned of its own conditions of possibility in and as the necessity of education. Most importantly of all, this is to comprehend the life of the teacher for whom the difficulties of social and political experience have yielded their truth as self-education. I realise that many of the Hegelian terms and statements here are yet to be explained, 'shot from a pistol' so to speak. For now however, they are necessary as introduction to Tubbs' work.

## Sociology

Passing the 11 plus exam and entering the grammar system of education meant that Tubbs' early educational opportunities and expectations were shaped and opened up in a way unlikely had he gone to the local secondary modern school. By the time he was sixteen the world of A-levels and university awaited. It was A-level sociology which first began to give voice to what were already burgeoning questions about the world and in particular about the nature and experience of oppositions, which as we will see, were to become the central idea and educational work of Tubbs as both a teacher and thinker.

Even at the age of 13, he writes, without knowing it as such, 'my formal education was separating itself from my philosophical education' (Tubbs, 2004: ix). In particular, sociology opened up the dualism of the individual and society for questioning. As to whether society determined the individual or whether the individual determined society, the answer for Tubbs seemed only to reside 'somewhere in the middle' (Tubbs, 2004: ix). To find meaning for these dualisms that was more than just the dominance of one side over the other underpinned the journey that was to come.

From 1978-1982, Tubbs pursued this sociological interest on an undergraduate degree in Sociology at Bristol University where its voice found education to be in the disruption of dualisms in 'contingency, relativism, and dialectic' (Tubbs, 2009: ix). The experience of sociology thus far and its political nourishment at Bristol were to have a defining impact. Its sheer educational force was something Tubbs did not want to lose. As he saw it, the only way to remain close to such an education was to teach, to be at the 'coal face' of education itself. So it was that after a PGCE at Sussex University, Tubbs, as a newly qualified teacher, began work at Thomas Bennett community college in Sussex. The years spent here were also to leave indelible marks on Tubbs as a teacher, yielding a thinking which was slowly carving itself into a philosophy of teaching which was soon to evolve into a philosophical vision of higher education. The school itself was a radical comprehensive still rooted in the ethos of comprehensive schooling and its principles of universal education. Tubbs found a freedom here to become a comprehensive teacher 'in the theory and practice of the learning learner' (Tubbs, 2009: ix). Along with other like-minded colleagues Tubbs would take up the challenge of teaching according to the comprehensive principle put forward by Pat Daunt in *Comprehensive Values* that 'the education of all children is held to be of equal worth' (Daunt, 1975: 10).

While still a teacher at Thomas Bennett, Tubbs embarked on an MA in Sociological Studies at Sussex University. This is where he met Gillian Rose as his supervisor. His first published article during this time, 'Relationships v. systems in education', shows Tubbs taking sociological debates around the question of the individual and society to education and teaching. At this early stage we can see him arguing that educational theory and practice must be able to ride the ambiguities of the dualisms with which it worked. These were seen at the time to be the 'systems' approach to educational reform whereby change is seen to filter down from the 'universal' organisational level to the particular, to the teacher-student relation 'on the shop floor' (Tubbs, 1986: 162) as he puts it. For Tubbs, a systems approach dominated and misrecognised its dependency on the face to face relations within the classroom and so did not acknowledge how the particular informed and reformed the universal. He argued that a systems approach must be mindful that it does not ignore

educational experiences on the ground for they constitute the real creative and reforming aspects of education.

Of course, 1986 was a difficult time politically for education. Tubbs was responding to sweeping changes to the comprehensive system, including the introduction of a national curriculum and changes to teacher training which introduced a uniform method for teaching which was presented as the 'one legitimate approach' to being a teacher (Tubbs, 1986: 158). This thinking recollected itself as *The New Teacher*, a book dedicated to articulating a philosophy of comprehensive schooling and teaching. It was informed not only by his experiences in education but by his continuing philosophical education under Rose. This included his reading of critical theory and critical pedagogy as well as a developing relation to the European speculative tradition of Kant and Hegel.

It was at this time that Tubbs began to develop a theory of teaching and the teacher/student relation within the framework of a philosophy of education for all. We can see that it contained the seeds of a much later and more explicit engagement with Hegel's master and slave relation as a way to articulate and understand the nature of authority and freedom and the tensions between the universal and particular within educational theorising. It is interesting to note here that the national curriculum generation that now make up the students entering university are facing real challenges when it comes to undertaking a university degree. They come out of a system of methods, formulas and an outcomes approach to which they must conform if they are to do well. They do not always know what freedom in education might mean in relation to their own work. It is no surprise that for Tubbs, the confusion and difficulty that some students experience here 'forms the beginning of a vision for a higher education as a direct social and political experience of modern social relations' (Tubbs, 2010: 3).

The defining moment of the MA was Rose's *Hegel Contra Sociology*. Finally, he writes, this was a book 'which spoke to the experiences of my experiences' (Tubbs, 2004: ix). Chapter one in particular, as we will see, read the whole of the sociological tradition according to its relation to and misrecognition of dualisms. It was of seminal importance in the shaping of Tubbs' philosophy. In 'What is Love's work' he writes of the book that it 'seeks to retrieve the experience of contradiction as the substance of life lived in the rational and the actual' (Tubbs, 1998: 34) and for Tubbs this meant that it retrieved the educational substance of the experience of dualisms that he had been seeking to articulate. Rose was central to his development as a thinker and teacher because her work, as he writes, 'commends that we comprehend the brokenness of this middle as the education of our natural and philosophical consciousness' (Tubbs, 1998: 34). This was to have a fundamental impact on the structure of experience which later came to underpin the Education Studies degree.

After the MA, Tubbs undertook a PhD with Rose. It was to be the basis of the book *Contradiction of Enlightenment*. As the PhD reached its final stages however Tubbs left secondary school teaching and entered higher education as a lecturer at King Alfred's College. It was here that Tubbs took the thinking of the PhD and developed it into a more explicit theory of higher education made manifest in the structure and essence of the two degrees.

All the while, teaching and writing were and continue to be the 'twin passion[s]' (Rose, 1995: 60) of Tubbs' work, constantly forming and reforming each other as education. Even as the output of his work continues and widens in scope Tubbs sustains his teaching and his relationships with students as the only place where education can be itself. We will explore this further in the last chapter for there is much to say about the teacher whose work is 'Love's work'. But we will also address why it is that this notion of education inevitably comes up short as theory. This has something to do with the fact that such a theory of education can only be actual as substance when it is subject, when it is education as *Know Thyself*, in and as the learning individual, but also, as we will see, a learning humanity. To present a notion of education outside of its experience will always in some degree fail to be education. But maybe this is part of the risk that education still makes to know its own truth.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored not only the nature of two extraordinary degrees and visions of higher education. It has also put them into the context of a life lived 'educationally' in the difficulties and contradictions of social and political experience. We might even say that we have followed the recollective education of the teacher discovering the truth of teaching and learning.

The work of Tubbs is important for the thesis as a whole because the concept of education that his work articulates and embodies in the life of the teacher can help us to understand not only the Hegelianism and educative insights of Williams but the educative substance of Hegel and Rose. It is my argument that the nature of the work of Rose, which we will explore in the next chapter, and its influence on Williams and Tubbs, can be understood now in the light of Tubbs' reading of education in Hegel. His work, I argue, allows us to recognise the educational substance of philosophical experience which is so often suppressed as the truth of philosophy's work. It makes the educative work implicit in Rose and Williams and even, we might say, in Hegel, explicit to itself as education and therein as the truth of the absolute.

# 3

## Gillian Rose: *Hegel Contra Sociology*

*...where you were concerned, we always  
arrived too late; too late, myopic, short of sleep,  
with fingers stumbling to decipher messages  
you left for us, engraved in a hard surface. (Williams, 2002: 84)*

### Introduction

In the previous chapters the work of Williams and Tubbs was introduced from across a diverse landscape of ideas, writings and interventions. We noted too that the development of their thinking owes much to the work of the Hegelian philosopher Gillian Rose and that the relation of Williams and Tubbs to Rose and Hegel is important therefore and thus necessary to understand if we are to explore not only the negative and speculative nature of their work but also its educational dimension. This chapter considers Rose's most important accomplishment and contribution to the field of Hegelian philosophy in *Hegel Contra Sociology*. This is with a view to returning to Williams and Tubbs in the light cast by this analysis. Before we begin however, it is necessary to say a little something about Rose herself.

### Miss Marple

'I like to pass unnoticed, which is why I hope that I am not deprived of old age. I aspire to Miss Marple's persona: to be exactly as I am, decrepit nature yet supernature in one, equally alert on the damp ground and in the turbulent air' (Rose, 2011: 144).

By all accounts, Gillian Rose did not pass unnoticed. Not only was she an extraordinary thinker and teacher but someone who lived her life with the most remarkable intellectual *eros* and *gravitas*. Her work, spanning the terrain of philosophy, sociology, theology, literature, poetry and Jewish thought, was notoriously challenging, but unapologetically so. Born in 1947 her childhood was marred and shaped by her parents' divorce, difficult relations with her father and a battle with dyslexia, experiences she writes candidly about in her autobiographical memoir *Love's Work*. Her 'Judaism of fathers and family' (Rose, 2011: 40) along with the struggle of reading; 'the repository of my inner self-relation' (Rose, 2011: 40) became, she writes, 'a personal, protestant inwardness and



independence' (Rose, 2011: 40). It was this independence which was to yield a most distinctive body of philosophical work.

Speaking in an interview with RTE radio in 1995<sup>45</sup> she tells us that she discovered philosophy at the age of 16 reading Pascal and Plato's dialogues, 'which deepened and did not seek to placate the burgeoning sadness of the teenage soul' (Rose, 2011:128). She falls in love with Socrates, the only way to discover if you are a philosopher she says. She goes on to study philosophy at St Hilda's college Oxford but is disenchanted by its narrow, oppressive and destructive ways of thinking. She teaches herself German by reading the works of Adorno with its 'notoriously difficult sentence structure' (Rose, 2011: 58). But, she writes that 'this embarkation also betrays a further motivation: an inexorable inner need to experience my dyslexia in daily intercourse with the signs and syntaxes of Adorno's forbidding universe' (Rose, 2011: 58). It is this fierce commitment to the experience of difficulty that, we might say, defines the direction and scope of her thinking and her personal reflections. Difficulty for Rose, as we will see below, has something to do with the integrity of this *work* of thinking, rooted always already in the Bacchanalian revel and repose of reason. Work is intellectual *eros*, which, she says in the interview, is not mere 'lack', as a post-modern theorising would have it, but the lack which returns us to the 'fullness of being'. She finds *eros* in Rousseau, Hobbes, Marx and Freud but not in deconstruction where lack is sheer absence and so only 'melancholic'. *Eros* for Rose is nothing less than a condition for metaphysics, ethics and politics alike.

When she died in 1995 after suffering from ovarian Cancer for two years, a number of obituaries from friends and colleagues testified to the formidable nature of her work and personality. This translated into personal relationships as a 'fierce commitment and unstinting support' of friends and a life lived 'in affirmation' (Caygill, 1996: 56) of the work of thinking, writing and loving.

Caygill writes that her work, from its beginnings in an engagement with Adorno, was driven to read Hegel 'free from the opposition between left 'political' and right 'theological' Hegelianism' (Caygill, 1996: 56), that the opposition between Marxism and a thinking of the 'absolute' masked the social and political import and actuality of Hegel's absolute which must be thought if politics is to retrieve the absolute truth of its own work. This thinking was realised as *Hegel Contra Sociology*. Despite the equally powerful and important works which were to follow; *The Broken Middle*, *Judaism and Modernity*, *Dialectic of Nihilism*, *Love's Work* and the posthumously published *Mourning Becomes the Law* and *Paradiso*, *Hegel Contra Sociology* remains one of the most distinctive defences of Hegelian speculative experience such has not been rivalled. Tubbs writes of the book and Rose's

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Andy O'Mahony for RTE Radio in 1995: <http://www.rte.ie/radio1/dialogue/1043490.html>

work as a whole that it commends an education in the experience of contradiction and *aporia* as ‘the substance of life lived in the rational and the actual’ (Tubbs, 1998: 34). For Tubbs, such a work is the educative truth of subjective substance. And for Williams too, it is the experience of learning which has something to do with God. In Rose’s own words, it is the divine comedy, where the ‘sureness of self, which is ready to be unsure, makes the laughter at the mismatch between aim and achievement comic, not cynical; holy, not demonic’ (Rose, 2011:135). It is the power of love, she writes, ‘to be able to attend, powerful or powerless; it is love to laugh bitterly, purgatively, purgatorially, and then to be quiet’ (Rose, 2011: 135). It is to the depths of understanding this ‘untiring exercise’ (Rose, 2011: 134) in Rose’s analysis of Hegel that we now turn.

## *Hegel Contra Sociology*

In *Hegel Contra Sociology* Rose retrieves ‘Hegelian speculative experience’ (Rose, 2009: 1) for a social and political theorising unable to comprehend the dualisms and dichotomies which underpin its thinking and which it finds itself reproducing. Rose argues that by coming to know the contradictions and *aporias* of dualistic thinking differently philosophy can comprehend not only the actualities of social and political experience but therein, importantly, its absolute significance.

This is why it is central to Rose’s argument that there is no social or political import to the speculative in Hegel or to any political critique unless we can think the absolute. This was a fundamental challenge by Rose to what she considered to be the failure of both Marx and Marxism to understand the nature of actuality and therein the actuality of our own thinking and acting. *Hegel Contra Sociology* yields ‘the project of a critical Marxism’ (Rose, 2009: 235) which comprehends the dualisms and contradictions of modernity as spiritual ‘work’.<sup>46</sup>

In chapter one of *Hegel Contra Sociology* Rose argues that the sociological tradition which has sought to understand and overcome the Kantian dualisms of theoretical and practical reason, has only served to reproduce dualistic ways of thinking because, however divergent its forms, it ‘necessarily presupposes the actuality or existence of its object and seeks to discover the conditions of its possibility’ (Rose, 2009:1). And this demonstrated its failure to recognise the transcendental structure of its own thought, what Rose calls the ‘neo-Kantian paradigm’ (Rose, 2009:1) which must presuppose the separation of that which it seeks to understand and reconcile.

Consequently, all sociological thinking, including the more critical strands of Marxist theory, constitute the ‘intellectual and historical barriers’ (Rose, 2009:1) preventing a rereading of Hegel’s

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<sup>46</sup> Caygill calls it an ‘aporetic Marxism’ (Caygill, 1996: 56)

philosophy which in fact, Rose argue, 'anticipates and criticizes the whole neo-Kantian endeavour... and consists of a wholly different mode of social analysis' (Rose, 2009:2). The chapter by itself constitutes a most powerful and forceful critique of all forms of abstraction, including what she argues to be the Heideggerian roots of a postmodernity which can only be 'a despairing rationalism without reason' (Rose, 1996: 11) because in its critique of modern reason 'it arrogates the authority under question' (Rose, 2009: preface) and fails to work with the difficulties or the presuppositions of its engagement with modernity. This is why she says of the book that it retrieves for modernity 'a non foundational and radical Hegel' (Rose, 2009: preface), a philosophical thinking which 'overcomes the opposition between nihilism and rationalism' (Rose, 2009: preface).

In the first chapter of the book, Rose reads all sociological thinking and critique as rooted in the 'return to Kant' (Rose, 2009:2) begun in the second half of the nineteenth century and she does this in the light of Hegel's philosophy. She argues that for Hegel, Kant's transcendental account of experience, that the 'conditions of the possibility of experience in general [are] likewise the conditions of the *possibility* of the objects of experience' (Rose, 2009: 5 author's emphasis) and its establishment of *a priori* laws for the correct use of reason, theoretical and practical, imposes a method for justified knowledge which abstracts itself from the conditions of the possibility of its object. This only serves to 'justify infinite ignorance' (Rose, 2009: 48).

The problem with Kant's critical philosophy is that the intention to examine thought prior to its use to see whether it is up to the job of examining the true nature of things, is fundamentally contradictory. When cognition examines itself it finds that 'the examination of knowledge can only be carried out by an act of knowledge' (Hegel, cited in Rose, 2009: 46). This is, writes Hegel, 'as absurd as the wise resolution of Scholasticus, not to venture into the water until he had learned to swim' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009: 47). For Kant, this contradiction meant that objective validity is restricted to objects of finite experience. The infinite is posited as unknowable. But for Hegel, any account of knowledge of the finite and the infinite presupposes that finite thought is external to its object, the infinite. For Hegel, it is consciousness itself which sets up the standard 'by which to measure what it knows' (Hegel, 1977:53). Consciousness makes the distinction between the object in-itself which is infinite, and hence unknowable, and the appearance of the object for us, or what can be known. To a natural consciousness, which is what Hegel calls this immediate presupposition of the object, knowledge is 'justified' in the finite realm according to methodological consciousness. But for Hegel, argues Rose, it is the contradiction that such a natural consciousness experiences within itself in relation to the external object, that 'provides the occasion for a change in that consciousness and its definition of its object' (Rose, 2009: 49). This change in Hegel is experienced

and recognised only by phenomenological consciousness within which a notion is implied 'which does not divide consciousness or reality into finite and infinite' (Rose, 2009: 49). In this way, the appearance of knowledge according to the criteria of consciousness 'become[s] uncertain' (Rose, 2009: 49), thereby implying the presence of the infinite or the absolute in way which does not pre-judge or state it abstractly. Its meaning cannot be abstracted from the 'whole' of its historical life as it is experienced in and as phenomenological consciousness: 'the whole can only become known as a result of the process of the contradictory experiences of consciousness which gradually comes to realise it' (Rose, 2009: 49).

The great insight and work of this chapter lies in Rose's critique of the whole of the philosophical and sociological tradition since Kant, which to varying degrees, she argues, has reproduced methodological consciousness and thus a transcendental account of thought which necessarily presupposes the object whose conditions of possibility it seeks to discover. Rose does this work for us in order to make way for the speculative experience in Hegel of all forms of dualistic thinking and the question of the absolute that is raised therein. In what follows I present a brief summary of Rose's reading of this neo-Kantian paradigm.

Kant's account of experience, of the *a priori* principles for the 'synthesis of perceptions into objects of experience' (Rose, 2009:3) lends itself to a reading which translates it into 'an exposition of objective validity' (Rose, 2009: 2) and this is 'restricted to the conditions of the possibility of objects of experience, of appearances, and to the conditions of all knowledge of objects' (Rose, 2009: 3). If it can be shown how subjective knowledge of objects has objective validity, through the employment of *a priori* principles, then a judgement of experience can be universally justified. But, says Rose, it follows from this reading that, first of all, the self, as 'the source of objective validity' (Rose, 2009: 4) or the 'transcendental unity of a perception' is unknowable, for it too can only know itself as it appears. Secondly, it is easily reduced to an account of how consciousness can achieve justified knowledge. We end up with theories which attempt to describe the 'process of consciousness' (Rose, 2009: 5) which itself leaves the object in-itself, somewhat bereft of a reality in-itself, thus undermining the presupposition of subjective and objective validity with which such an account begins.

The key transformation of Kant's critical philosophy, out of which rose the idea of a 'scientific sociology' (Rose, 2009: 6), begins, writes Rose, with the German philosopher Lotze. Here, the neo-Kantian paradigm is shaped around the notion of 'validity' and 'values'. It is in their abstract separation, argues Rose, that we get, in varying forms, 'a general but not a formal logic: a methodology' (Rose, 2009: 9). This 'neo-Kantian sociology' (Rose, 2009:6) made a distinction

between 'the reality of necessarily valid truths which belongs to thinking and the reality of the given facts which belongs to perception and cognition' (Rose, 2009: 7). Added to this was 'the reality of determination of value' (Rose, 2009:7), because it was argued that part of what perception does is to confer value and meaning on to things. It makes value judgements in a way which does not 'conform to the principles of scientific understanding (*Verstand*)' (Rose, 2009: 8). In this way, reason is already moral consciousness which recognises 'an absolute standard' (Lotze, cited in Rose, 2009: 9) to be employed in the service of 'ethical action' (Rose, 2009: 9).

The neo-Kantian paradigm is thus turned into a methodology which 'enquires into how an object can and should exist or be created' (Rose, 2009:9), a *Sollen* which does not enquire 'into the conditions of the possibility of experience which is actual' (Rose, 2009: 9). A sociological account of validity and values misrecognises social, political and historical actuality which determines all action. It objectifies the object of which it is 'prescriptive and normative' (Rose, 2009:9) regarding the rules and the object to which they correspond. What we get from this is the collapse of scientific enquiry into 'object domains' (Rose, 2009: 10) which are inevitably objectified in their resting on such a methodological critique. It results in scientific 'subjects' and emerging 'philosophies of identity' (Rose, 2009:10), both of which posit 'a pure logic and its objectifications' (Rose, 2009:10) i.e. a logic independent of cognition's determinations.

These subsequent methodologies became the basis for a 'scientific consciousness' (Rose, 2009:12). But these were now based on the unification of thought and its object which developed out of the idea that 'there is no distinction... between the logic of thinking and the reality of 'being' [because] being is the being of thinking: and thinking is the thinking of being' (Rose, 2009: 11). The object of science was now subject to the methodological examination of a pure logic of validity. It is out of this paradigm, argues Rose, that the philosophies of Durkheim and Weber arise, both of whom attempt to attach a methodology to validity and values – Durkheim to validity, Weber to values.

The thought of Durkheim and Weber is of crucial importance in the history of sociology as it is presented by Rose because, despite fundamental differences in their thought, sociology was now to be the primary method for an interpretation of experience that unified theory and practice and established 'a sociological object-domain *sui generis*' (Rose, 2009: 15). But, she argues, firmly rooted in the neo-Kantian paradigm the question of validity in Durkheim and values in Weber, presupposed the separation between individual experience and the realm of social or moral facts. Once again this makes it impossible to recognise the actualities of the experience of their separation which is already presupposed.

A sociological account of experience which seeks to discover the social or cultural *a priori* of actual social or moral facts yields a transcendental logic by which they can be known, a logic which becomes the 'basis for the possibility of experience' (Rose, 2009: 15). But, these sociological *a priori* are distinct from the mind and so become themselves an object, making the relation between social *a priori* and actuality ambiguous. The sociology of Durkheim and Weber and the strands of the sociological discipline which emerge from them as 'logics of the social' (Rose, 2009:23) serve only to repeat the fundamental separation in Kant's philosophy between theoretical and practical reason. This separation, Rose argues, yielded the difficulty of the relation between moral autonomy and the law. Freedom becomes the experience of the contradiction between law and ethics which, in the sociological paradigm of validity and values, is a modernity unable to think itself. For Rose, Kant's natural law theory presupposed the fundamental division between the state and civil society and so posited an idea of law which will always contradict the experience of the particular. Modernity's opposition between moral consciousness and the law, between universal and particular, cannot therefore be comprehended because it presupposes prevailing social and political relations. For Rose, the neo-Kantian framework of thought perpetuates misrecognition, one unable to know itself.

Within the sociological domain, the strand emerging out of Durkheim's thought, which gave priority to validity, interpreted the social realm through 'the logic of constitutive principles' (Rose, 2009:23) and a critique of consciousness. The second strand, following Weber, gave priority to values through the 'logic of regulative postulates' (Rose, 2009:23) and so determined social reality within 'consciousness and its oppositions' (Rose, 2009:23). The latter is what we take to be sociology today: 'society or culture as a value' (Rose, 2009:23).

It was because of the contradictions inherent within these methodological strands of sociological thought that new forms of critique emerged, among them Heidegger, Benjamin, Dilthey and Gadamer. These critics saw in the logic of validity an inherent positivism and sought instead to reveal the historical presuppositions of any logic which abstracts validity from its actual conditions of possibility. The question of existence is thereby retrieved as 'metacritique', as she calls it, of the Kantian and neo-Kantian *a priori* as socially, historically and externally presupposed. It was a more sophisticated critique, she argues, in that it understood that reason – logic or method, cannot be investigated or established except by the use of reason, of that which it attempts to justify. The social and historical preconditions of this circularity of reason is thus revealed to have its own preconditions. It is '*Dasein*' for Heidegger, 'life' for Dilthey, and 'history' for Gadamer. These become 'the *a priori* of a new kind of ontology' (Rose, 2009: 25).

But, Rose argues that these metacritiques become themselves another presupposition. This reproduces a Kantian transcendental structure but this time without a result. In other words, for Heidegger, *Dasein* becomes an identity which is presupposed as outside of the experience of 'consciousness and its oppositions' (Rose, 2009: 25). And any 'outside' or 'space' for being which is not of experience, lends itself to being a quasi-transcendental logic, liable to 'methodological exploitation' (Rose, 2009: 26). Once again, a speculative treatment of validity is prevented as the Kantian dualistic paradigm of validity repeats itself.

Rose writes that the most ironic examples of this are the phenomenological ontologies, emerging out of the phenomenology of Husserl. They confuse a phenomenological 'validity', most 'a sociological' (Rose, 2009:26), with 'values', which on the one hand, yields a highly critical sociology because it reveals the 'reified' nature of meaning and social institutions. But on the other, becomes itself a form of natural consciousness. The two strands of neo-Kantian sociology converge because they lack the actuality of phenomenological education which is fundamental to social, political and historical critique.

It is with the work of Lukács and Adorno that we find 'the most original and important attempts to break out of the neo-Kantian paradigm' (Rose, 2009: 45). But she calls their Marxism a neo-Kantian one. This is because their readings of Kant determined how they read Hegel. We end up with a 'Marxist sociology of cultural forms' (Rose, 2009:29) which in fact reformulates the neo-Kantian paradigm of validity and values which presupposes the relation between subject and object.

Lukács' 'sociology of reification' (Rose, 2009:31) took Marxist critique to much wider realms of investigation, writes Rose. He argued that the totality of social forms; 'legal, bureaucratic and cultural' (Rose, 2009: 30) do not just constitute the superstructure, but are mediated objectifications; themselves reified forms of the capitalist totality. Lukács revealed the illusory nature of the validity of all social forms which allows the totality to be viewed, not from the point of view of its abstraction, but by its mediation, which thus becomes the validity of social forms as a 'theory of historical mediation' (Rose, 2009: 31). Whilst this was an important development and opened up a Marxist critique to new analyses, it led ultimately to an idealistic account of how change in the consciousness of the proletariat would overcome reification. It assumes that "objectification' is an 'act of consciousness'" (Rose, 2009: 33). For Adorno also, this argument remained within a neo-Kantian paradigm of subject and object which only served to 'idealise pre-capitalist injustice' (Rose, 2009: 33).

Adorno's critique in contrast, recognised mediation to be the impossibility of a relation to the totality not itself reified by that totality. Tubbs writes in 'Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose' that 'what could be known was the brokenness of the totality, and Adorno therefore felt that the idea of freedom could at least be kept alive if this brokenness was consistently experienced by consciousness' (Tubbs, 2000: 45). But even though Adorno expounds social forms within his concept of negative dialectics, like Lukács, argues Rose, he too failed to develop a 'speculative sociology of the proletariat' (Rose, 2009: 35), of the conditions of the possibility of relation to the totality of mediation. A Kantian misrecognition of Hegel's speculative, makes Adorno's thought in the end, also abstract.

The consequences of a non-Marxist and Marxist sociology, has been a 'systematically ambiguous' (Rose, 2009:42) distinction between 'theory' and 'method'. The rejection of neo-Kantian methodology as well the rejection of Marxist and Hegelian theory is done so 'in the name of neutral and descriptive methodology' (Rose, 2009:42). Non-Marxist critiques have done this by "demystifying' Hegel's notion of 'objective spirit'" (Rose, 2009:44) thereby making it into a general and neutrally descriptive term such as culture or world view. What this amounted to was a fundamental rejection of a philosophy of history which, in Hegel, is precisely what comprehends the relation of spirit to the totality of social forms. In Hegel it is the 'meaning of history as a whole' (Rose, 2009:44). And as Marxist sociology distinguished between a 'left' and a 'right' Hegel, a 'method' and a 'system', a 'schema' is imposed which, argues Rose, Hegel did not endorse. What is critical in Rose's analysis is that she argues that what both approaches do is ultimately reject a 'notion of the 'absolute'" (Rose, 2009:45), whilst attempting to hold on to the social implications of Hegel's dialectic. But, and we will return to the importance of this below in Rose's work, 'Hegel's philosophy has *no* social import is the absolute is banished or suppressed, if the absolute cannot be thought' (Rose, 2009: 45 author's emphasis).

## Speculative Experience

It is to Hegel's speculative that Rose turns as a way to comprehend the dualisms of modernity differently. She writes that 'Hegel put a trinity of ideas in place of Kant's idea of transcendental method: the idea of phenomenology, the idea of absolute ethical life... and the idea of a logic' (Rose, 2009: 48). Phenomenology in Hegel presents the contradictions of natural consciousness. It re-presents the contradictions to itself. But in this way it sees that the oppositions and the negations which natural consciousness experiences issue in a change in the relation between consciousness and its object until 'the two become adequate to each other' (Rose, 2009: 49). In one sense, this suggests a 'synthesis' of experience, a resulting unity. But we have to be careful of such terminology



when it arises in Rose because of the temptation to see it as simple synthesis. Rather, the 'appearance' of unity is another 'natural' relation, which in Hegel and Rose always contains illusion and is thus contradictory. Speculative experience of the natural makes known that it also always presupposes political relations ordinarily hidden by it. There is never a simple unity in Hegel that can be taken unproblematically.

What then, does speculative experience in Rose's Hegel really mean? She writes that in an 'unfortunately schematic statement' (Rose, 2009: 52) Hegel asked that his propositions be read speculatively. What he meant by this was that 'the identity which is affirmed between subject and predicate is seen equally to affirm a lack of identity between subject and predicate' (Rose, 2009:52). This means that the propositions of a natural consciousness are *experienced* as contradictions. Natural consciousness begins with a fixed relation between subject and predicate, 'joined by the copula 'is' (Rose, 2009: 51). The subject is the 'bearer of variable accidents' (Rose, 2009: 51) and the predicate, that which gives the content. But it is the experience of the relation which is important here. Experience is already the motility of the relation hidden by the ordinary proposition. Therefore, experience of, or relation to, the contradiction makes known that subject and object 'acquire their meaning in a series of relations to each other' (Rose, 2009:52). Speculative propositions in Hegel unsettle what natural consciousness takes for granted about itself, which is why it is a critique of all dualistic forms of thinking and the political presuppositions which hide themselves therein. But Rose's key insight into the speculative is that the consciousness that experiences and recognises the lack of identity of dualistic thinking is itself dualistic consciousness. The speculative is also a critique of modern reflective philosophical consciousness in its own abstractions. Phenomenology in this way is a discovery of the bourgeois relations which determine philosophy's own natural relation to its object. It is part of Hegel's philosophy of history to show that every version of truth in history, every presupposition of the actuality of the object, has misunderstood how the object carries political pre-determinations.

Kant's critical philosophy for Hegel, by demarcating the relation between finite and infinite, unknowable and knowable things in-themselves and thus the limitation of cognition to the finite, made the assumption that a method can be imposed on the object as though it is external to it. But Hegel showed that the contradictions which such a natural thinking inevitably experiences are formative ones. This is why, argues Rose, Hegel's critique of Kant was a phenomenology of Kantian critical consciousness and not a replacement of it. Phenomenology presents how it is experienced according to its 'own methodological standards as they have occurred' (Rose, 2009: 49). When the relation between consciousness and the object is known speculatively, then 'a notion is implied'

(Rose, 2009:49) which helps us to know what power we really possess and what the nature of our actual acting in the world looks like. Without a speculative account of the object, says Rose, 'we are powerless' (Rose, 2009:48) to know actuality. In turn we are left unable to initiate a change in social and political relations. What the speculative nature of Hegel's philosophy shows is that 'our concept of the infinite is our concept of ourselves and our possibilities' (Rose, 2009:48). For Hegel, Kant's theoretical distinctions between the finite and infinite and the practical distinction between morality and legality are contradictory but through the idea of phenomenology and the notion of absolute ethical life Hegel was able to show that the distinction implies the whole, which in its lack of unity, can be thought.

The point is that phenomenological experiences discover the educative life of its contradictions 'over time, as a series of shapes of consciousness' (Rose, 2009:50). It is therefore a critique of method by Hegel, for there can be no method at the outset, only once its actuality has been learned or only when it 'appears in a sequence of experiences' (Rose, 2009:50).

## Religion and the State

The fundamental speculative proposition in Hegel is that 'in general religion and the foundation of the state is [*sic*] one and the same thing; they are identical in and for themselves' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009:51). Natural consciousness experiences such a statement as a contradiction for it is not our experience that religion, or subjective relation to God, is manifest as the objective relations of state. In fact, we experience the universality of law as over and against subjective experience. We are not able to reconcile these oppositions. Yet the experience of the contradiction is the basis for reading propositions speculatively.

Hegel presents various experiences of religion and the state, says Rose, in order to show that it is the 'relation between the two... [which makes] up the whole of ethical life' (Rose, 2009:53). The earlier political writings, in which absolute ethical life is more explicit, are in fact phenomenologies, written, says Rose, in the 'severe style'.<sup>47</sup> They *present* the moral and political shapes of consciousness in the way that they come to realise the actualities of ethical life. They are not to be read as abstract assertions of the state because it is only in and as the contradictions presented that absolute ethical life is implied. This is why she asserts that Hegel's thought has so often been misread when not read

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<sup>47</sup> Rose refers here to Hegel's definition of the three styles in the *Aesthetics*. See *Hegel's Aesthetics, Volume II*, pp 616-618 for a definition of the Severe, Lofty and Ideal styles. The early writings are 'severe' in the sense that they are 'concerned to give a true representation of... [the] object' (Rose, 2009:54) but less concerned with the unification of the representation and its meaning, as is the case with the 'lofty' or 'ideal' style, which Hegel developed as a more comprehensive critique of the political problem of the relation between theory and practice.

speculatively. It is the experience of phenomenology in Hegel which prevents ethical life being turned into 'an autonomous prescription, a *Sollen*' (Rose, 2009:54) which could only be experienced as not present.

Hegel, intent on showing a different kind of identity, shows that the idea of absolute ethical life and its social relations, found particularly in the empirical natural sciences and the critical idealist philosophies of Kant and Fichte, presupposes an immediacy which underpins all subsequent dichotomies of freedom and necessity, infinite and finite, unity and multiplicity, concept and intuition. Hegel's critique of these theories shows how a 'state of nature' is posited as the 'basic truth of men's condition' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009:56) which is at once a 'fiction' and an abstraction upon which the idea of law is seen to rise as the 'organising principle' (Rose, 2009:56) or the unification of the 'multiplicity of atomised individuals' (Rose, 2009:56). But this idea of law is an abstract unity or *Sollen*, because it is ultimately alien to a state of nature. Hegel shows that such a state is in fact derived from observations of prevailing social and political relations, which are made the *a priori* conditions 'of the whole' (Rose, 2009:56), but a whole or an absolute which can have no ultimate justification. Natural law theories cannot comprehend the actualities of the immediate relations they presuppose.

Hegel and Rose show that Kant and Fichte were unable to acknowledge the relations that underpinned their accounts of freedom. The dichotomies of a theoretical and practical reason posit only a formal freedom which lacks its actuality as content. The idea of absolute ethical life is able to emerge in these early critiques because Hegel read the dichotomies as '*relations* or lack of identity' (Rose, 2009:59 author's emphasis) and so a new identity is conceived. Lack of identity re-presents the relations not immediately intelligible. This is what Hegel calls 'relative ethical life' which in the philosophies of Kant and Fichte in their abstractions of the moral and political individual from social and historical relations, is bourgeois private property; 'the life of isolated individuals who exist in a relation to each other which excludes any real unity' (Rose, 2009:60).

Taking us through the *System of Ethical Life*, Rose shows how it is that social institutions correspond to the dichotomies of concept and intuition, how they re-present the 'lack of identity of the social totality' (Rose, 2009: 69). Prevailing political relations correspond to the primacy of the concept of absolute ethical life over intuition; over nature, the object, feeling and empirical consciousness. Hegel begins from these relations, she argues, as a way to develop a new 'kind of identity... out of intuition' (Rose, 2009: 69) thereby recognising the actuality of absolute ethical life in contrast to the determinations of the concept which would be another imposition of a just society. In Hegel, writes Rose, intuition (*an-schauen*) means a 'seeing-into' (Rose, 2009:69) which does not dominate the

object. It refers to that which is intuited, whilst being at the same time able to 'look back, *without*, in its turn, subsuming or denying the difference of that at which it looks back' (Rose, 2009: 69 author's emphasis). Intuition is able to recognise the difference without abstracting itself from the actuality which it sees.

When intuition 'predominates' it is a *felt* difference from the world in the sphere of immediate ethical life, most notably the family, manifesting itself as simple need or desire. In the family each 'sees him or herself in the others and acknowledges the difference' (Rose, 2009: 73). But immediate relations are arbitrary because there is no actual concept of the universal by which to establish social institutions. However, when intuition is subsumed by the concept, for instance, when law is posited as formal equality, then intuition is 'productive labour' (Rose, 2009: 70) or transformative activity; the means of control over and the satisfaction of need. The concept of ethical life becomes a moral or ethical ideal which dominates nature thereby reinforcing prevailing property relations which presuppose power over nature. An idea of freedom which is posited in opposition to nature, to necessity, can only 'injure' real relations by the imposition of law. It cannot transform them, merely punish that which does not conform to the ideal. Labour presupposes simple 'need' as that which acknowledges simple difference from the world and from other. But when it predominates it transforms this felt difference into a 'relation' by working on it. The relation that a society has to work therefore determines the actuality of its political and social life and yields further dichotomies derived from the relation between concept and intuition.

For Hegel, natural ethical relations such as the family, despite being universal can only be an abstract and arbitrary principle of universality and not a model for political unity. And yet, political relations require that there is a concept of the universal for this is how the individual sees himself in the other, in and as difference. Hence, intuition for Hegel was absolute intuition because both the difference and the sameness of the other is recognised as the totality of social relations and not subsumed by a concept of the totality which masks the *experience* of the individual alienated from universal consciousness and from the other.

From the point of view of absolute intuition, spirit is universal as mutual recognition. This is a notion able to acknowledge the relations of private property without reproducing the immediacy in which the actuality of these relations are suppressed and not recognised. But Hegel ended up evolving this concept of intuition, writes Rose, to show that it is in fact a 'triune recognition' (Rose, 2009:76). But Hegel needed a more adequate term for the motility of the relation of concept and intuition at work here. Intuition thus becomes re-cognition, *An-erkennen*. At first, the idea of intuition assumes that the poles of the relation of concept and intuition 'see each other without suppressing each other'

(Rose, 2009:76) and so avoids the dichotomy of a reflective understanding. In reflection “a’ sees itself directly in what is opposed to it, ‘b’ but the seeing is one-sided. ‘A’ sees itself in ‘b’ but ‘b’ does not see itself in ‘a’. Hence ‘a’ sees only a distorted view of itself, the reflection of individual domination’ (Rose, 2009: 76). This marks the crucial distinction for Hegel between the abstract philosophies of reflection and speculative experience as re-cognition.

Whilst absolute intuition manages to avoid the domination because each ‘sees’ itself mediated in and by the other, intuition could not acknowledge adequately enough ‘the lack of identity or difference which is seen’ (Rose, 2009:76), the actual experience of the relation for philosophical consciousness. It is therefore ‘too successful’ (Rose, 2009: 76). Recognition is able instead to express the triune structure of the experience because the “an’, ‘into’ (Rose, 2009:76) of *An-schauen* becomes “re’, ‘again’ in *An-erkennen*’ (Rose, 2009:76). It ‘implies an initial experience which is misunderstood, and which has to be re-experienced’ (Rose, 2009: 76) to be ‘fully known’ (Rose, 2009: 76).

Recognition in Hegel then always implies miscognition or the lack of identity which is not immediately seen. And at the same time it implies the unity which mediates its recognition (miscognition) of the ordinary determinations that consciousness makes. *Anerkennen* implies speculative experience rather than what the abstract recognition (miscognition) of ordinary propositional statements achieve. This triune structure of recognition is one of the key themes in Rose that underpins her Hegelian insights into the nature of the speculative as social and political critique. It acknowledges the actuality of prevailing property relations and thus the illusions of absolute ethical life based on these relations, including its re-presentation as art and religion.

Recognition arises out of the contradictions of bourgeois private property, argues Rose. Kant’s concept of the universal, which makes subjective maxims conform to universal *a priori* laws, presupposes relations of private property which cannot, ‘by definition, be universal’ (Rose, 2009: 78). Possession can only be guaranteed by ‘all’ if everyone is to have ‘an equal right to possess’ (Rose, 2009: 78). Possession is thus transformed into property. But the contradiction here is, that if the right to possess is universal, then there is no sense in which possession can be ‘private’ for it just as much belongs to all others.

Possession guaranteed by and for all can only be so when it is for the particular individual, thus collapsing the universal. If I recognise that the right of others to possess is also my own right then there is a mutual recognition in property which seemingly removes the contradiction. But, the right to private property means that anyone can stake a claim on what I own. I am not secure in my

private property relations. If the contradiction was removed so that possession referred to the universal only, then there would not be private property. The actuality of universal property law is merely the abstract form of private property in which the individual knows himself within the universal, but only as a particular and isolated individual. Kant's notion of the universal rested on the actuality of private property relations which only knew the universal abstractly, from the point of view of its contradictions.

Formal recognition is thus misrecognition in Rose because it corresponds to the domination of the concept of private property. Rose writes that in this totality, art as intuition is able to represent the universal which is not present in private property. But it too, is a form of misrecognition for whilst it re-presents the universal in the imagination, it is a unity which is not actual because it re-presents only the isolated individual unified by that which is not present i.e God or Love. The same goes for religion which can only re-present real relations. Intuition might predominate, says Rose, but because it is always a relation to work, intuition is misrecognition.

In the end, the speculative proposition that the state and religion share the same foundation means that the 'the idea which a man has of God corresponds with that which he has of himself, of his freedom' (Hegel cited in Rose: 2009: 98). The significance of this is as follows. For Hegel and Rose, as long as there is religion (*Vorstellung*),<sup>48</sup> which is the relation between subjective consciousness and God, man is not free because truth is not with man alone. This lack of freedom re-presents itself in various forms of religious representation. Our representation of God or truth is therefore always a shape of our not being free and hence is misrepresentation. For Hegel and Rose the modern European notion of freedom corresponds to a 'bad conception of God' (Rose, 2009: 98) which indicates a bad state and vice versa because it indicates the 'extreme subjectivity' (Rose, 2009: 99) of the modern bourgeois principle of freedom, the independence and self-determination of a mastery rationally defined and guaranteed within the legal framework of private property rights. Tubbs calls this extreme subjectivity, 'the modern religion' (Tubbs, 2000: 50). Reason's universally mediating everything is now the way that subjectivity relates to truth, including itself. For Rose, this is the correlate of an unknowable God. My freedom is a self which is absolutely in-itself in the way that truth is in-itself and not other. But in this way, I have ruled myself out of knowing truth in-itself because truth in this way can only be mediated truth. But I am the truth of that mediation, of that

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<sup>48</sup> Religion is *Vorstellung* which means 'representation... and 'pictorial' or 'imaginative' thinking' (Rose, 2009: 98)

which can be known. And so, as we have seen above for Rose, an unknowable God makes us powerless, for we too are unknowable.<sup>49</sup>

There are thus two truths going on here. On the one hand, extreme subjectivity misconceives of the absolute as a 'principle of political unity' (Rose, 2009: 99); the state. This new religion is the rationality of a freedom which because it is abstracted from the universal can only assert the law of private property rights abstractly. On the other hand, because this idea of freedom is experienced as a lack of freedom in real social and political relations, because private property freedom is not universal, the absolute is also misconceived as the idea of God, for this lack of freedom re-presents itself in the medium of *Vorstellung*. This rational subjectivity can only know itself in opposition to the universal for self-determination means that I am not a collective and real relations do not make me free. Law can only be experienced as an imposition. Consciousness continues to 'define[] and understand[] the absolute as otherworldly, in opposition to social and political relations (the state) and correspondingly, defines and understands itself in its relation to the absolute as otherworldly, thereby excluding its social and political relations' (Rose, 2009: 99). As it comes to experience the contradiction between its definition of the absolute, and real relations, its concept of the absolute, political and religious, changes. But, for Hegel and Rose, as long as real relations are excluded from the absolute and the absolute is '*represented as 'God', it is inconceivable as the absolute*' (Rose, 2009: 98 author's emphasis) and so a conception of God or truth makes truth unknowable, above and beyond thought. But this means that 'religion by definition cannot think the absolute' (Rose, 2009: 99).

It is easy however, to experience this *aporia* of modern dualistic consciousness as merely negative. But this would be to miss the absolute significance of the experience of *aporia*. Truth in Hegel is substance which is just as much subject. This is why the absolute must be thought if Hegel's philosophy is to have social and political import. But it can only be thought by a philosophical (speculative) comprehension of the meaning of religious representation, and the social and political relations to which it corresponds. As Hegel writes, 'when a man truly knows about God, he knows truly about himself too' (Hegel, 1895: 80)

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<sup>49</sup> It could be argued that this unknowable God equates also to the relativist view of truth enamoured by much of the western world. Allan Bloom writes in his book about liberal education, *The Closing of the American Mind*, that the maxim 'truth is relative' is the one thing that unites students from all backgrounds and political persuasions. They see it as 'condition of a free society' (Bloom, 1987: 25). It is also, for the most part, the views expressed by students on the Education Studies and MLA degree at Winchester. Truth in-itself cannot be known. Might we say however, that according to Rose's argument, relativism still works with a notion of truth in-itself, albeit a truth which is unknowable, and that this is a re-presentation of a modern subjectivity which can only know itself in opposition to this. We could say that, in one sense, relativism is religious belief for it is an idea of God as unknowable.

We can see this truth of subjective substance in the introduction to the *Phenomenology*. Modern reflective consciousness finds itself contradicted in and by natural experience. Consciousness has two objects, the first in-itself but also the in-itself which is for consciousness the in-itself. The reflective age (*Verstand*) takes the latter to be the truth of what appears. But the pathway of doubt which natural consciousness experiences with the loss of its first object in-itself becomes its inability to achieve an absolute knowing of that which is in-itself. Reflection cannot hold to an absolute truth.

But what reflective consciousness does not see or learn in this immediacy is that the pathway of doubt in Hegel is substantial. The True is the object which 'contains the nothingness of the first' (Hegel, 1977: 55) so that truth is the *experience* of the relation, the *work* by which consciousness knows something. In reflection, 'the object sinks for consciousness to the level of its way of knowing it' (Hegel, 1977: 56) but experience 'guides the entire series of the patterns of consciousness in their necessary sequence', which however when it is *for us*, becomes the truth of natural consciousness 'as movement and a process of becoming' (Hegel, 1977: 56 author's emphasis). Our philosophical education begins by our acknowledging that the identities of dualistic thinking are real. But they are an immediacy which it is also illusion (*Schein*).

I want now to turn to Tubbs for a moment to help flesh this out further. He writes that we know immediacy is illusory because it 'is present in our experience' (Tubbs, 2000: 48) as modern reflective individuals. Modern reason knows itself to be natural consciousness. It is this self-relation, as self-certainty, that knows it is the truth of all reality. But this means it is also abstract in its definition of itself. But in this way however, reason is also now the 'work of abstraction' (Tubbs, 2000: 49) seeking to know itself. It is thus the gap or the *aporia* that abstraction yields. In various ways, argues Tubbs, the sociological tradition has tried to express this gap as an in-itself, or a 'third', whether it be 'praxis, history, contingency, *Dasein*, mediation, structuration, *difference*' (Tubbs, 2000: 49). But for Tubbs, these thirds only repeat the abstraction and fail to acknowledge the *aporetic* actuality of their own critique as also subjective substance.

What phenomenological consciousness in Hegel comes to realise is that its relation to natural consciousness is its own determination, a determination in and as the experience of natural consciousness. To comprehend the determinations of philosophical consciousness as itself a representation of the relations of natural consciousness is to know that the experience of immediacy conditions the whole as it is known and experienced. For Hegel and Rose, argues Tubbs, philosophical consciousness comes to learn that it is 'the totality of the conditions of the gap...[as] both sides of the gap *and* the work of their separation/relation' (Tubbs, 2000: 49 author's emphasis). The absolute is now known differently, abstractly and non-abstractly, because it knows the absolute



to be its own work as subjective substance. The third partner is present here in and as the thinking which comprehends the truth of the relation.

Rose writes that Hegel treats of the dualisms of modern consciousness 'with great seriousness' (Rose, 2009: 59). We might say that this is exactly what Rose, Williams and Tubbs do also in the work to think negative and speculative thinking. The dualisms of modernity for Hegel, mark the beginning of an exposition of bourgeois society and the illusions which posit the prevailing principle of freedom as the 'absolute principle of the whole' (Rose, 2009:87). Only an experience of the contradictions of bourgeois society can uncover the truth and the untruth of what abstract consciousness takes for granted about itself. It is the *Philosophy of Right* which is most often misunderstood as a series of ordinary propositions. One of the examples Rose gives of this misreading is Hegel's assertion that the concept of the will is 'the self -determination of the ego, which means at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative... and in its determination binds itself to itself' (Rose, 2009:85). Read ordinarily the statement appears to be an endorsement of the abstract ego. However, it is the concept of the will as it *appears* in an abstract philosophy of the will. Only from here can philosophical consciousness develop a critique of ethical life according to its real relations.

## Religion and Philosophy

If religion cannot think the absolute, writes Rose, then only by a speculative reading of its propositions can its meaning be comprehended. She gives the following example of this. Religious consciousness presupposes first of all that 'God exists' (Rose, 2009: 100). This simple abstract assertion marks the beginning of a philosophy of religion which seeks to develop the cognition of what God is. But 'God exists', by itself, denotes 'merely dry Being' (Hegel, 1895: 203), only the pure principle of the absolute which lacks content and is thus unknowable in-itself.

Religious consciousness must add a content to being, an idea which gives it meaning. But when predicates are ascribed to God, such as love or essence, we still only have 'abstract characterless identity' (Rose, 2009: 100) for they are external determinations of the understanding. God remains unknowable. Read speculatively, the proposition, like the identity of state and religion, implies our experience of the separation of the realm of the finite and infinite, where natural consciousness defines the absolute 'in opposition to everything which is not absolute' (Rose, 2009: 108). The finite realm once determined as being, leads consciousness to the concept of the infinite as the ideal being, of immediate being, to essence as the ground of being, of the particular to the universal, of effect to its cause and all of these characteristics of being are described as God. But this separation posits finite consciousness as error in relation to the infinite.

This is why the speculative proposition that 'God exists' indicates that God is a representation of that which we cannot conceive - the unity of finite and infinite, particular and universal, which implies that we are not infinite. Therefore the proposition implies that God is our experience of not being immediately universal, that individual experience is not universal experience, that we are not free. 'God exists' rather 'implies that we live in (or experience) the 'contradiction between the determination or concept and the existence of the object', in the contradiction between pure and empirical consciousness, or, between our definition of ourselves and our experience of real social relations' (Rose, 2009: 100-101). This is the basis for speculative experience, which is thus phenomenological experience of religious representation which teaches us that our natural definitions of the universal, truth or God come up always against real existence. We experience and come to know them as contradictions. It is then that the absolute can be thought, but only as logic. For the determinations belong to the notion of the absolute in its unfolding into externality, and it is in the *Logic* that this notion of the absolute, in and as the pure realm of thought, unfolds to the truth of what it is in and for itself.

Rose shows how Hegel developed a speculative account of the philosophies of reflection of Kant and Fichte who, it was argued, were unable to develop a notion of freedom as substantial because even though they knew that our idea of God was that of our freedom, they made the absolute subjectivity and so reproduced the abstract oppositions of finite and infinite. From this the *a priori* principles of freedom were posited outside the realm of the finite so that the principle of the rational will could not ultimately be justified. Faith in this 'invisible world' (Rose, 2009:103) constituted it's never being present. Both the finite and infinite worlds are reinforced in their opposition but also debased because freedom is a freedom from necessity, from the sensuous finite world which, in turn, makes the infinite merely 'an idol' (Rose, 2009:104), empty of all content. Hegel re-presents Kant and Fichte's concepts of freedom and God in Kant and Fichte according to their social and political relations. But the speculative is what re-forms these formal notions of freedom. Rose's insight here is that it is the *Aufhebung* in Hegel, as the experience of negation, which constitutes the actuality of oppositions as speculative. It is in their lived experience that the 'inner character' (Rose, 2009: 110) re-cognises abstraction as substantial.

The opposition of finite and infinite means that the infinite can only be a pure nothingness, forever without determinateness. This means that we are 'grieving' and yearning for a God who is unknowable, to whom we cannot be reconciled because his death re-establishes that he is beyond finite existence. The reflective age expresses a new unhappy consciousness which does not know that it is unhappy. For in the continued separation of state and religion, it fails to find meaning in its

experience of contradiction and loss. The speculative Good Friday however, re-forms the losses and oppositions of finite and infinite by a 'philosophy of history' (Rose, 2009: 112), by showing that God 'has been the *fate* of absolute freedom' (Rose, 2009: 111 author's emphasis) and thus the continued misrepresentation of religion. A philosophy of history learns how subjectivity became substance and how substance became just as much subject and how therefore 'the state and religion became divorced' (Rose, 2009: 112). This argument is also at the heart of Tubbs' more recent work on modern metaphysics.

One of the criticisms of Hegel's philosophy is that his own thought is read to be just as abstract and methodological as that which it critiques, that the statements in the preface and introduction to the *Phenomenology* are just as much reflective and illusory standpoints which reproduce the abstract relation of consciousness to its object. What Rose argues is that these assertions miss the significance of the relation between philosophical and natural consciousness that we have been exploring. The *Phenomenology* is a 'science' of the experience of natural consciousness which means that there are two experiences going on – the natural experience of the object and that experience as it is *for us*. The contradictions of experience for natural consciousness constitute the loss of itself, whereas for us, they are 'the determinations of substance' (Rose, 2009: 159) in the continued experience of natural consciousness. This is why 'the *Phenomenology* is the education of our abstract philosophical consciousness' (Rose, 2009: 160). The beginning of the *Phenomenology* is itself one of the contradictory forms of abstract consciousness which it then goes on to dismantle by a presentation of the experience of that consciousness. Abstraction 'is the only way to induce abstract consciousness to begin to think non-abstractly' (Rose, 2009: 160). And we are this abstract philosophical consciousness when we embark on phenomenological experience for such a beginning is already the modern Kantian and Fichtean mind which takes itself as a starting point from which to interpret the world. It is therefore an education that philosophical consciousness has about itself, that the deformations which it observes to be its own natural experiences are the determinations of substance and subject in various forms of misrepresentation. But furthermore, its own experience of dualistic consciousness and its attempts to unify its oppositions can only appear dualistically and hence as another natural relation.

The *Phenomenology*, argues Rose, is not a prescriptive method for the removal of the illusions of natural thinking in a journey of 'self-enlightening doubt' (Rose, 2009: 162). It is rather 'the conscious insight into the untruth of phenomenal knowledge' (Hegel, 1977:50). This is more than a scepticism which doubts the truth of all things for such a consciousness begins with, and returns to, a presupposing of the natural. Rather, that which is untrue is shown to be 'in truth only the unrealised

concept' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009: 162) which carries within itself its own untruth as an in-itself external to consciousness, but therein is the in-itself which is for consciousness. Our thinking is always this opposition 'within consciousness (Rose, 2009: 163) itself which is why when natural consciousness experiences a contradiction between its definition of the object and its real existence, a new in-itself arises which is just as immediate and abstracted from the negation from which it has arisen. It is only *for us*, in our experience of our natural thinking, that the new object is *determinate negation* and hence not another unmediated in-itself. For Hegel and for Rose, when philosophical consciousness thinks its own determinations and discovers them to be illusory, it learns that illusion and its accompanying experiences of contradiction and negation are educative for it. It is self-determining when it re-cognises the truth of the in-itself to be also its own continued misrecognition of the object and thus misrepresentation of substance and subject.

## The Owl of Minerva

For Rose, the speculative in Hegel is philosophy's own 'time apprehended in thoughts' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009:87). This is why it is not a *Sollen*. Philosophy 'always comes on the scene too late to give instruction' (Hegel cited in Rose, 2009:87) because it is already conditioned by the illusion it critiques. But, as above, the illusion is what makes its critique possible and aware of its own actuality, for in phenomenological experience consciousness comes to learn that it is the 'substantial essence of actuality' (Rose, 2009:88). It learns what it is in-and-for-itself absolutely because it returns to itself and knows abstraction to be the illusion which constitutes its knowing and its freedom. Philosophy, writes Rose,

'is the time, after the time of art and religion, for the owl of Roman Minerva, the esoteric *concept* of philosophy, to *spread* its wings and to turn back or rather forwards into Greek Athena, the goddess of the unity of the *polis* and philosophy, absolute ethical life, the exoteric unity of theory and practice, of concept and intuition' (Rose, 2009: 88 author's emphasis).

The *Phenomenology*, despite lending itself to a chronological reading, at the same time undermines such linearity. For we observe the repetition of dialectical experience not abstractly but as the 'causality of fate'. What this means, says Rose, is that we observe the appearance (*Schein*) of 'rationality and law' (Rose, 2009: 165) in its experience of division into subjectivity, into the *concept* of the whole which cannot be realised as subjective relations. We thus observe the 'fate' of ethical life in its being 'known', both as 'individual experience...moral experience and...religious experience' (Rose, 2009: 164).

At first ethical life in antiquity is 'seen as the rationality of the whole society' (Rose, 2009: 165 author's emphasis) and is the individual appearing (*Schein*) as universal life. If the individual transgresses the whole, then law becomes the domination of individual life, a 'hostile power' (Rose, 2009:165) asserted against individuality. When the ethical individual experiences a loss of the whole, he recognises that this loss is a loss of his own substance. This is the immediately 'visible rationality' (Rose, 2009: 165) of universal ethical life. In the *Phenomenology* it is presented as Athens, a 'substantially free and happy nation' (Rose, 2009: 167) where the individual knows that his work is this universal work. But it is also the way that he suffers because by coming up against the whole the individual also knows that he has 'turned [life] into an enemy (Rose, 2009: 165).

This immediately lived law of ethical life in itself however, must 'also be lost' (Rose, 2009: 167) if it is to be known. This is why this substantially free nation is only known by us, argues Rose, meaning that what we observe is yet to be achieved by it. The individual's immediacy must inevitably experience its opposition to the whole if he is to know himself as part of it. It is the causality of fate that substance will be subject. In this division from the whole as self-consciousness, 'consciousness is now self-consciousness: it does not receive itself back from the whole but only part of itself' (Rose, 2009: 167).

The concept of the whole becomes the formal law of ethical life which sets itself against individual life, for it cannot recognise that substance was individual life. The ideal 'can survive only by denying ethical life' (Rose, 2009: 166) and this makes the idea of the whole a corruption of it. For Hegel, this is what gave rise to the abstract notion of Christian freedom which was posited in relation to the lack of any clear ideal of ethical life after the dissolution of the Roman Empire. It is a concept 'which cannot be realised in any particular nation or polis, and therefore can exist alongside real lack of freedom' (Rose, 2009:175). In the *Phenomenology* we observe the necessity of the forms of consciousness to be the fate of substance which loses itself as an in-itself and how this relation to truth is experienced by a natural consciousness who can only re-present the absolute by making it for us.

It is only when phenomenological consciousness reaches its own abstract consciousness (*Verstand*) that it is able for the first time to comprehend the law of its own determination, that it too is a determination of substance. But it knows that social and political actuality, as prevailing experiences of state and religion, constitute its determining. This is why, for Rose, the *Phenomenology* is not about the overcoming of the opposition between consciousness and its object in some final reconciliation between the internal and external worlds. Rather, she argues, 'it is a gamble. For the perpetual occurrence of inversion and misrepresentation can only be undermined... by an *allusion* to

the law of their determination, to the causality of fate' (Rose, 2009: 168-9). Substance is thus 'present' in a phenomenology which traces its own misapprehensions of its relation to substance. It thus returns, not prejudged, from the standpoint of relation, not the whole. This standpoint is that of the master and slave relation in its various misunderstandings of freedom – stoicism, scepticism, the unhappy consciousness, the spiritual-animal kingdom, morality. The *Phenomenology* is 'the book of *Verstand*' (Rose, 2009: 169), writes Rose, because it presents the relations of natural consciousness from its own point of view 'separately from divine history' (Rose, 2009: 169).

## Culture

Rose roots the adventures of a reason constantly educating itself in and as the inversions of history and dialectical experience, in the unhappy consciousness. This is the shape of relation which is 'inwardly disrupted' (Hegel, 1977:126) in the knowledge that it is a 'dual-natured, merely contradictory being' (Hegel, 1977: 126). In Hegel it is the culture of self-relation and therein the actuality which is formative for self-consciousness. As we have seen in Tubbs, this experience of culture is significant for a theory of education in Hegel for in the relation between its pure thinking of itself and its real existence, it is a master and slave relation which is actual living spirit, a broken unity with itself in its otherness. But this is only implicit for it does not yet know this to be its essential nature. At first, consciousness takes these two aspects to be opposites; the essential unchangeable in itself opposed to the unessential contingent nature of finite existence. But because it knows itself to be both, which the in-itself cannot be, it identifies itself with the unessential side. The unchangeable in-itself becomes that which is posited externally to consciousness because it can only reproduce a relation to it of particularity. The contradiction is then repeated so that consciousness can only yearn for a reconciliation that is beyond its own experience of real relations. Even knowing God incarnate in the person of Christ fails to unify particular existence with the universal for the actuality of Christ as a finite individual disappeared so that reconciliation becomes a hope beyond real relations and thus the mere feeling of a unity beyond actual human experience. Consciousness can only 'agonise' over its 'existence and activity...[for it] is conscious only of its own nothingness' (Hegel, 1977: 127).

This individual then, is not actual as a unity in otherness and so can only live out 'the *grave* of its life' (Hegel, 1977: 132). But here, the slave lives its truth as nothing implicitly, not yet for itself. Consciousness has a 'feeling of *self*' (Hegel, 1977: 132 author's emphasis) even though it is separated from its essentiality. However, 'it can only *find* [] itself *desiring* and *working*' (Hegel, 1977: 132 author's emphasis). It finds itself in a dialectical experience which cannot achieve confirmation of its

freedom as a unity. It lives its life as master and slave but does not yet know this to be the truth of the unity it seeks with the in-itself.

In Hegel, writes Rose, the unhappy consciousness is the 'culture' of master and slave as spirit which is alienated from itself. It is as a culture that actuality 'is broken in two' (Hegel, 1977: 133), both the universal unchangeable in-itself, 'a sanctified world' (Hegel, 1977: 133) and the actuality of desire and work. The world cannot be negated by an independent consciousness seeking to enjoy it for its own self-certainty but can only be seen as a gift from the unchangeable. So consciousness gives thanks for its work and enjoyment even though that enjoyment is its wretchedness.

Actuality is now the individual who is for himself in his working on the world and as possessing intrinsic being which belongs to God. Tubbs writes that culture in Hegel is the way that these two sides attempt to re-form each other. But 'attempts by one to reform the other are for us only repetitions of the pre-conditions of their separation' (Tubbs, 2004: 32). But this divided actuality called culture, or alienated spirit, is not merely its form of externalisation, argues Rose, but its 'vocation' (Rose, 2009: 174) to re-form itself. It is not however the same alienation characteristic of modern reason. Culture in Hegel is the way that dualistic consciousness reproduces the *aporia* of its being dualistic, the illusions that characterise thoughts relation to the object. But, as Tubbs points out, as a culture of master and slave, the illusion now carries work as its own self-determination or education. This is highly significant for the direction that the end of *Hegel Contra Sociology* takes in relation to the 'fate of Marxism' (Rose, 2009: 229). Rose goes on to trace the phenomenological shapes of culture in Hegel which, she says, culminate in the self-deception of the German Reformation and French Revolution. But I will not follow this argument here. Instead, I want to turn now to the idea of subjective substance in Rose.

When philosophical consciousness in the *Phenomenology* reaches its own abstract standpoint, it is, writes Tubbs, 'its own formation and finality, for it is its own third party, it is its own experience' (Tubbs, 2004: 31) as self-determining. Self-knowing spirit in the *Science of Logic* is, for Tubbs, the higher education that philosophy realises as absolute knowing. But we must remember that, as Rose argues, this is the absolute which cannot be pre-judged, only 'implied' as notion. This is the idea of Hegel's system; 'the idea of a whole which cannot be grasped in one moment or one statement for it must be experienced' (Rose, 2009: 194). What phenomenological consciousness sees is that 'substance is negative' (Rose, 2009: 193), known only in the experience of its negation by a self-consciousness which posits substance in various forms as other to itself. Phenomenological consciousness only now 'comprehends the shapes of its consciousness as they appear in their contradictions' (Rose, 2009: 193).

But another journey still lies ahead for consciousness because this result is another beginning for it. The immediate I that we observe in the *Phenomenology* is 'spirit which is purely subjective' (Rose, 2009: 194) in the sense that it has not yet become object to itself as self-consciousness. It is we who observe for consciousness how it becomes aware of itself in the experience of the presuppositions it makes about the object as other or as 'appearance' (*Schein*). We see that it recollects its actual life as 'simple objectivity' (Rose, 2009: 194) and so determines itself as subjective. This is the logic of spirit which is both subjective and objective: to be object to oneself is to be already subjective and to be subjective is to be already an object to oneself.

To observe the determinations of subjectivity is for us to acknowledge that 'the determination is ours' (Rose, 2009: 194). This takes us beyond the merely subjective. But from the point of view of ethical life, spirit that is objective to itself is, in this way, 'not fully objective' (Rose, 2009: 194) because ethical life is 'the realm of law (*Gesetz*) that is, of positing (*setzen*)' (Rose, 2009: 194) and so does not know that which is posited to be the actuality determining us and our relation to it. Subjective consciousness which is free, is actual only in private property relations; a freedom which is posited or which is 'only free in principle' (Rose, 2009: 194). It is the *Logic* which 'expound[s] the actuality of positing or law... to show that positing and the law can be comprehended outside the simple subjective viewpoint' (Rose, 2009: 195). Hegel does this, writes Rose, by giving a 'speculative rereading of Kant and Fichte' (Rose, 2009: 179) to show how their philosophical dichotomies reproduce the abstract standpoint of a positing which does not know its own determinations.

The *Phenomenology* however is the 'experience of positing' (Rose, 2009: 195), of laws 'fixed' as universal by a natural consciousness which gradually comes to see itself in its particularity in opposition to what it has posited as universal. This experience is the developing comprehension or education of abstract philosophical consciousness as to its own abstractions. A notion is implied so that it learns that its positings are the law of absolute ethical life.

Again the educative substance of this philosophical experience is that it is the 'vocation' of consciousness to know itself in its positing as the *law* of substance. Only philosophy in Hegel, not morality or religion, is able to comprehend the immediacy of law as posited because, argues Rose, it knows that our abstract concept of law, of the universal, of absolute ethical life, is also our experience of being in opposition to law, of particularity, of relative ethical life in which we are not free. Relative ethical life has continued to determine a reading of the absolute as either a *Sollen* which 'reinforces prevailing law' (Right-wing Hegelianism) or is imposed on it (Left-wing Hegelianism).



## The Absolute

The critique offered by Hegel and Rose argues that speculative experience is of fundamental social import for it is 'the basis for the critique of different kinds of property relations and for the critique of different kinds of law' (Rose, 2009: 218). But the radical significance of both Hegel and Rose here is that we fail in our political and philosophical theorising and acting if we cannot think the absolute nature of this theorising, if we cannot think the absolute. Only a thinking of the absolute offers a comprehensive recognition of and social import for the social and political totality of actual relations. This is, for Rose, to renew the question posed by Marx of 'how do we now stand in relation to the Hegelian dialectic' (Rose, 1996: 70), a question that must be renewed for our time if there is to be a 'possibility of an ethics which does not remain naive and ignorant of its historical and political presuppositions and hence of its likely outcomes' (Rose, 1996: 70-71).

When at the end of the *Phenomenology*, philosophical consciousness knows itself to be substance which is just as much subject, consciousness continues to experience itself as object and so recollects itself in and as forms of Science. The absolute is now known, but negatively, for we have observed it to be the subjectivity which posits substance as other than itself, other than the continued self-certainty of its life in relation to objects. We are able to know ourselves comprehensively in this way because we now carry, in recollection, the work of the relation which is subjective substance.

This is the idea of the system in Hegel. We traverse the moments of simple subjectivity in its becoming objective to itself as subject. But this is for it to be the movement of both objectivity and subjectivity for subjectivity is its being object to itself. Phenomenological experience in Hegel comprehends that we are determined, but more than this, it achieves a relation to subjectivity such that we 'go beyond' (Rose, 2009: 194) the natural. We see what it does not see, that the simple self is actually free only when it is objective spirit, a 'person' in the actual world. But this objective freedom is the law of property which we have observed to be the experience of positing so that what appears to be universal is in fact abstract and so 'not fully objective' (Rose, 2009: 194). To think the absolute is also to fail to think the absolute.

The experience of positing, for Rose, is the experience of substance which is in-itself, the experience of a natural consciousness which ends up fixing positing as abstract consciousness. But this is the moment in the *Phenomenology* when we reach our own standpoint. As a result of this education, we are able to acknowledge the relation to actuality which is ordinarily hidden. We learn that we live in the broken middle of immediacy and mediation, of freedom and lack of freedom. This is why, as

Tubbs writes, mediation is not adequate enough a term for actuality for in the end it remains caught in the dualism of subject and object. Actuality is posited and is therefore subjective. But speculatively, actuality recognises the 'totality of the conditions...which more or less reappears' (Rose, 2009:220) in our acting. This might have been Marx's critique of Hegel as a pure idealism, writes Rose, but actuality here contains what reappears as another abstraction. The education of phenomenology is 'the third partner in the triadic relation of universal, particular and individual and is the recognition of actuality as *already work*' (Tubbs, 2000: 52 author's emphasis).

A notion of actuality then which is also a theory of subjectivity is central in Hegel and Rose to a speculative understanding of dualistic consciousness in all of its abstract illusory forms. But this can only be achieved by a thinking of the absolute for only then are we able to recognise the actuality of social and political relations. It was Rose's critique of Marx that he did not read Hegel speculatively and so failed to develop a theory of actuality or subjectivity within which the absolute could be thought. For Rose, Marx repeated the failure of abstract philosophical consciousness in its 'displacement of actuality' (Rose, 2009: 223) so that he could only re-present its property relations, seen most notably in the antinomical form of his theses on Feuerbach. Tubbs writes that Rose's challenge to Marx, is that his notion of praxis 'suppresses the work of the representation which is actuality' (Tubbs, 2000: 52) and so 'make[s] subjective substance unthinkable' (Tubbs, 2000: 52).

For Hegel and Rose, property relations will always yield an abstract consciousness unable to think the absolute. This is why only a speculative account, which both thinks and fails to think the absolute will do. Rose writes that Hegel attempted to find a notion of absolute ethical life outside of the contradictions of property but was unable to do so, hence the development of a speculative account of those contradictions. This is why the speculative proposition that the foundation of religion and the state are identical is so fundamental. In teaching us that our idea of God is always already our thinking of ourselves, the re-presentation of social and political experience, we find ourselves in the inescapably broken relation between our thinking of the absolute and finite political relations which cannot be transcended. But in this brokenness we can achieve a speculative relation to this relation which is formative and therein substantially critical.

The problem that Marx had in developing a theory of actuality centres, argues Rose, on the problem of beginnings and ends which Hegel and Marx attempted to expound. But Rose shows how in Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach there is an antinomical form within which materialism is opposed to idealism, where actuality is object and subject, theory and practice. Rose argues that this reinforces the dualisms of theory and practice he sought to overcome. The triune structure of recognition is fundamental here if there is to be a transition to a speculative experience of theory and practice.

Philosophy re-cognises its object making the relation educative, whereas, in Marx, 'practice suppresses' (Rose, 2009: 230) the actuality of the object so that it is reinforced in its domination.

In the same way, Marx read the speculative proposition of religion and the state as an ordinary proposition which affirmed the separation of the idea of God from social and political relations. What Marx lacked for Rose, was the concept of culture that we find in Hegel, of 'formation and re-formation' (Rose, 2009: 233). Culture is the way that consciousness is itself re-formed by the actuality which it does not see. Marx and Marxism therefore, did not know how they too are re-formed in the inversions of culture and how they therefore represent substance or actuality abstractly. Rose saw *Hegel Contra Sociology* as a 'critique of Marx' (Rose, 2009: 235) because of his inability to conceive of capitalism and his own thought as a culture. As such a critique it was, for Rose, a radical and critical Marxism re-cognised as vocation, as able to know the broken middle of political experience as 'a way of life' (Tubbs, 2000: 51). Tubbs writes that for the individual who struggles with the dilemmas of a human freedom conditioned by the separation of state and religion, the struggle is a spirit of protest that can 'retrieve itself in the face of bourgeois law whose concrete subjective freedoms dominate and mask the religious nature of reason and the political actuality of religion' (Tubbs, 2000: 55).

## Conclusion

In the end, Rose's retrieval of the speculative in Hegel means that we do not remain naive to the presuppositions which are carried in and by our actions and therein to the failures and 'unintended consequences' of political action. It is to know reason as comic, which was for Rose, 'the infinite light-heartedness and confidence felt by someone raised altogether above his own inner contradiction and not bitter or miserable in it at all' (Rose, 1996: 63). Comedy here is 'the movement of the absolute' (Rose, 1996: 64), what Rose calls the drama of recognition and misrecognition. It is the work of truth, which, displaying the 'abused actuality of substantial life' (Rose, 1996: 64) is also 'inaugurated mourning' (Rose, 1996: 76). It is not melancholic but the divine comedy.

# 4

## Hegel: Key Concepts

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, Rose's defence of the speculative in Hegel was explored and this presented us with a view of speculative experience which challenges abstract forms of modern reason. In subsequent chapters I will explore how this notion of speculative experience underpins the educational theorising of Tubbs, and in part, the philosophical thought of Williams.

But it is part of the argument of the thesis that in order to do this, the relations of master and slave and life and death in Hegel, as well as their significance for a concept of illusion, must be understood. Chapter five will examine Tubbs' reading of these relations and the centrality that they hold in his theory of philosophical education. In this chapter, I take the more unusual strategy of reading the relations as they appear in the *Phenomenology* together with the doctrine of essence and the 'Notion' in the *Science of Logic*. It is my argument that not only does the master and slave relation describe the template of experience in Hegel, but that it also constitutes the logic of reflection, and therein, the educational structure and essence of the 'system' of speculative philosophy.

To bring the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic* together in this way is due, in part, to Rose's reading of Hegel, for she argued that 'the *Logic* is a phenomenology of abstract philosophical consciousness' (Rose, 2009:200) despite the fact, that at the end of the *Phenomenology* it has grasped the notion of itself as Science and so enters the truly speculative interpretation of the world. The beginning of the logic demands its own relation to phenomenological experience because it continues to live naturally in relation to the world. Logic just as much requires its own relation to actuality to be acknowledged according to the logic of its own abstractions. As the Hegel scholar Henry Harris writes, the 'real philosophy' of the logic might be the 'comprehension of eternity' (Harris, 1995: 100), but 'it is *our* thought' (Harris, 1995:100 author's emphasis). It is only 'by regarding the Science of Logic and the Science of Experience as a conceptual circle can we defend the integrity of the Hegelian logic' (Harris, 1995: 104). Unfortunately, as Tubbs argues, phenomenological experience, and therein the concept of master and slave, is rarely pursued in Hegelian philosophy 'beyond its presentation in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*' (Tubbs, 2004:26). To consider the conceptual circle in this way in the chapter then is another nod in the direction of the system which says that the

experience which consciousness has of itself as phenomenology and as logic can 'comprehend nothing less than the entire system of consciousness, or the entire realm of the truth of spirit' (Hegel, 1977:56). I take this up in this chapter with a view to thinking the implications of this in the work of Tubbs and Williams later on.

The chapter will be divided into two parts. Part one will look at the famous sections in the *Phenomenology* on the notion of recognition, the life and death struggle and the master and slave relation. These concepts play a central role in the thesis because they constitute the notion of experience which underpins the whole of Tubbs' theory of education, which in turn, I use to cast a light on Williams' work. I argue that where Tubbs is explicit in his theorising of this, Williams also has in his analyses of power and freedom, a notion of experience in which the master and slave relation and illusion is present. This is most visible in his remarkable ability to articulate and speak to the contradictory and illusory experiences of modern freedom in the relation between power and powerlessness, certainty and uncertainty, vulnerability, loss, risk and suffering.

In part two, I take this structure of experience to the logic of reflection in the *Science of Logic*. From here I explore the Hegelian notion within a framework of education. It is at this point that I discuss Tubbs' theory of modern metaphysics which was touched upon in chapter two in relation to the question of first principles. The analysis there is extended here, in order to show the significance of the notion in Hegel for a re-formed metaphysics. This will provide the thesis with the Hegelian ground from which the work of Tubbs and Williams can then be explored.

## Part 1

### The Truth of Self-Consciousness

When we reach the simple shape of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we have traversed the single shapes of the ordinary understanding in their dialectical experience of the object. We arrive at the point at which the in-itself of sense, perception and the self-sufficient 'infinite' of the Understanding is lost in the experience that it is for consciousness.<sup>50</sup> We begin with a self that presupposes the world as belonging to it.

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<sup>50</sup> The object of sense is the singleness of objective existence. Perception is the transition to a conceptual world which asks what things really are. It asks as to the universality of things. But it has no stability in this realm because the object of perception is a totality of all possible things and relations. With the Understanding, the universality of things is stabilised as the thing 'in-itself', what Hegel calls the result of force of the law of the supersensible beyond which enables a scientific comprehension of things as they are in themselves. Harris writes that even though they appear in the *Phenomenology* in a 'progressive sequence...

The transition to self-consciousness proper, the self-consciousness which knows itself to be free, comes with the comprehension that the object is in truth its own self and its own movement. It has become an object to itself. Hence, the starting point for self-consciousness is what Harris calls 'the rational concept of Desire' (Harris, 1997: 343) for freedom is the negation of carrying difference in a desiring return to itself as the truth. What this self-consciousness has not yet learned however, but will be taught in and by experience, is that freedom exists in- and-for-itself because it so exists for another. The movement of this comprehension is as follows.

For consciousness in the shape of sense-certainty, perception and the Understanding, truth lies in 'something other than itself' (Hegel, 1977:104). But we observe that in experience the in-itself 'turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for an other' (Hegel, 1977: 104), for consciousness. In these previous shapes consciousness is indeed certain of itself as an individual but this knowing or this object is not yet, for itself, 'a unity with consciousness in general' (Hegel, 1977:102). When this first object is superceded (*aufgehoben*) in experience so that 'certainty gives place to truth' (Hegel, 1977:104), we observe that 'consciousness is to itself the truth' (Hegel, 1977:104) and the singular self emerges in its instinctive knowing that the object or the world belongs to it.

Hegel calls the movement of knowledge or the 'for consciousness of the in-itself', the notion. He calls the passive unity of the object, or knowledge itself, the I. This means that the object in-itself, or the I, is just as much the notion or the object for an other. And what is for an other or is notion is just as much the I or the object in-itself. Both of these moments are now 'one and the same' (Hegel, 1977:104). Consciousness is I when the object is in-itself, in the same way that it is I when the object is for consciousness. This is the truth of self-consciousness in its self-certain beginning; the I which is the 'content of the connection and the connecting itself' (Hegel, 1977:104). It is self-consciousness in its 'native realm of truth' (Hegel, 1077: 104). But we are observing a self-consciousness which does not yet know what we know about it. Its self-certainty is not yet objective truth. What follows next is our observation of its becoming explicit to itself as the universal or as self-conscious reason.

In the simple shape of self-consciousness it would appear that the object in its previous shape has vanished. But in fact only the in-itself of the object is lost. The moments which constitute its immediacy; those of sense, perception and the Understanding, are preserved but only as 'moments' of self-consciousness. They are differences which have no abiding reality in themselves. The I makes a distinction but one which is immediately cancelled. Yet the independent object which subsisted in itself and now seems lost constituted the very movement of self-consciousness as a 'return from

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[indicating] the phases that our concept of "the world" goes through' (Harris, 1995: 22) this is not how we experience them for they 'live together side by side in our ordinary consciousness' (Harris, 1995:22).

otherness' (Hegel, 1977:105) for it sees itself in its experience of the other. But because it does not see the other as a being in itself, it is immediately a sublated other. Self-consciousness in this immediacy is only the 'motionless tautology of: 'I am I'' (Hegel, 1977:105). It does not yet know what it means to be self-consciousness. It just knows that it is I. As Harris writes, 'properly speaking it does not say anything. It just knows that it is in the world that belongs to it. This is the consciousness of being alive' (Harris, 1997: 318).

Immediate self-consciousness has before it 'the whole expanse of the sensuous world' (Hegel, 1977:105) which is preserved for it in its being an object. This conceptual unity of the distinction between the in-itself and the being-for-consciousness of the in-itself, Hegel calls Life. But posited merely as an object it is nothing in itself. It is merely appearance and thus transitory and unessential. Essentiality lies rather in its being for self-consciousness. But we are in the realm of immediacy here and self-consciousness only has the appearance of life to consider. The truth of the unity that self-consciousness achieves as a negation of appearance therefore 'must become essential to self-consciousness' (Hegel, 1977:105).

This is why Hegel asserts that 'self-consciousness is Desire in general' (Hegel, 1977: 105). Jean Hyppolite in *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, argues that desire is the fundamental experience of positing in Hegel, the independence which takes self-relation as it appears, as identity, when in fact this beginning with itself is presupposed, or as we will see later in the chapter, is illusory being. Desire is the 'movement of consciousness which does not respect being but negates it, appropriating it concretely and making it its own. Desire presupposes the phenomenal character of the world which exists for the self only as a means' (Hyppolite: 1974:159). What we see, Hyppolite writes, is that self-consciousness as desire is a dialectic of desire and the satisfaction of desire. And so, because the unity it achieves with itself is always constituted by its division from itself, being-for-self is always mediated, a self which is 'always other in order to be itself' (Hyppolite, 1974:150). Self-consciousness 'never is what it is and always is what it is not' (Hegel cited in Hyppolite, 1974:150). As desire in general then, self-consciousness is certain that it is free instinctively and that the world exists for its own satisfaction. But this is at first only for its own subjectively ordered world. It is yet to comprehend what we know about it, that the unity that it has with itself is self-recognition is absolute otherness. We have before us, the concept of spirit.

At first then, in the realm of immediate spirit, the concept of life emerges, for the object on its side has gone back into itself as the difference which is to be no difference. Hegel proceeds to give us a philosophy of life whereby life, as the immediate reflection into self, is a living process. Life proceeds from the immediacy of being, from the merely independent life consumed and used by self-

consciousness, to life as the 'universal unity... the simple genus which, in the movement of Life itself, does not *exist for itself qua* this *simple* determination [but] on the contrary...points to something other than itself, viz. to consciousness, for which life exists as this unity, or as genus' (Hegel, 1977:109 author's emphasis).

Self-consciousness which is genus becomes consciousness of life as the 'self-developing whole which dissolves its development and in this movement simply preserves itself' (Hegel, 1977:108). Hegel shows us in these passages how the concept of life comes into being for the simple I in the movement which negates and preserves it as a whole. But this concept of life is also the concept that man has of his freedom. The abstract I which we observe is certain of itself only by superseding what it takes to be independent life, 'will enrich itself for the I' (Hegel, 1977:109) and become, through the movement of life which is in its own self negation, genus on its own account. In the immediate opposition of self-consciousness and life, the experience of contradiction becomes explicit for consciousness, for the 'negative freedom of consumption is soon recognised as bondage to the needs of the finite life' (Harris, 1995: 37).

The concept of spirit is the self-consciousness which 'exists *for a self-consciousness*...for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it' (Hegel, 1977:110 author's emphasis). To be truly free it must recognise itself in another consciousness that cannot be consumed. Recognition is 'a conceptual unity of opposites' (Harris, 1995: 37). With this pure notion of spirit we are presented with the 'process of Recognition' (Hegel, 1977:111). It is, writes Tubbs, 'the truth of all self-consciousnesses who come to know themselves only in and as their social relation' (Tubbs, 1997: 153). But it is interesting to note the relation that these next three sections on recognition, the life and death struggle and the master and slave relation have in the *Phenomenology*. Observing the pure notion of recognition leads us to ask what it actually looks like, or in other words, how spirit 'appears to self-consciousness' (Hegel, 1977:112). And what we see is that there is a fundamental relation to death that is already determinative of recognition so that its truth in the other is not mutuality but its failure. The actuality of recognition is already a relation of master and slave, a structure of recognition which is always one-sided and unequal.

## Mutual Recognition

Mutual recognition, writes Tubbs, is 'the event whereby a free and genuine social relation is realised between individuals who do not have the relation as an object for them but as themselves' (Tubbs, 1997: 152). It is a pure 'middle' for it 'exists in and for itself' (Tubbs, 1997:153). It is described by Hegel as follows. Self-consciousness 'exists in and for itself by the fact that it so exists for another;



that is, it exists only in being acknowledged' (Hegel, 1977: 111). In this way it is not an object like the other objects of life, the merely independent and unessential objects of desire, but 'just as much I as 'object' (Hegel, 1977:110), that which knows itself in its knowing of the other and in its being recognised by that other. Mediation is now the turning point of consciousness. Spirit here is the 'I that is 'We' and 'We' that is I' (Hegel, 1977:110), the truth of self-consciousness as not an extreme but as the truth of all self-consciousnesses. Kojève writes in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, that 'it is only in being "recognised" by another, by many others, or - in the extreme - by all others, that a human being is really human, for himself as well as for others' (Kojève, 1980: 9). But for the consciousness that we are observing the *experience* of this 'spiritual unity' (Hegel, 1977:111) still lies ahead of it, the truth of its freedom is yet to 'become explicit for it' (Hegel, 1977:110).

So it is then that self-consciousness meets another self-consciousness and in doing so 'finds itself as an *other* being' (Hegel, 1977:111), external to itself. Being outside of itself in this way it has 'lost itself' (Hegel, 1977:111). Self-consciousness only 'sees its own self' (Hegel, 1977:111) in this other for it is not essential being in its own right. It thereby supercedes (*aufgehoben*) its being other at the moment of otherness and returns to the self-certainty from which it began.

But superceding the other is superceding its own self for 'this other is itself' (Hegel, 1977: 111). This identity which self-consciousness finds on return then is an ambiguous one for whilst it receives itself back as a unity, mediated by the sublated other, the other is also preserved as an other because it too has become 'equal to itself' (Hegel, 1977:111) in the encounter. Each 'lets the other again go free' (Hegel, 1977:111) and each faces the other in otherness once again.

We must remember that this movement of recognition proper is a 'double movement' (Hegel, 1977:112). We cannot observe it one-sidedly (from within the process itself) for it is a reciprocal one where 'it is indivisibly the action of one as well as of the other' (Hegel, 1977:112). The other then is also independent for self-consciousness is an I who is not immediately submissive to or dominated by the others desire in the way of ordinary objects. What is to happen between the two is to be a reciprocal process of independence as negation and recognition. Each must be its own negation for the other and in this way each is a self-determining and autonomous individual. 'Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same' (Hegel, 1977: 112). Recognition is 'brought about by both' (Hegel, 1977: 112). For Kojève this is a mutual 'choice'. Self-consciousness is 'intentional becoming, deliberate evolution, conscious and voluntary progress' (Kojève, 1980: 5). The threat posed to self-certainty results in a mutual and conscious supersession of the other in a return to self-knowledge, an independence constituted by the relation itself. We will see below that the

experience of such a threat however is already expressive and generative of a life and death struggle.

In the process of recognition, the 'middle term' is self-consciousness as a being-for-self and a being 'for the self outside it' (Hegel, 1977:112). It is an 'exchanging of its own determinateness and an absolute transition into the opposite' (Hegel, 1977: 112), both equally essential moments. This makes each self-consciousness 'for the other the middle term' (Hegel, 1977:112), for the other the self-relation which mediates self-consciousness as a 'being on its own account' (Hegel,1977:112). And so 'they *recognise* themselves as *mutually recognising* one another' (Hegel, 1977:112). In this pure concept of recognition the middle is a purely mutual ground of relating. Self-consciousness is not an extreme but a mutually constituted selfhood.

But our observation of this middle raises a question for us. Mutuality is not the relation we know as self-conscious individuals in relation to each other. We are observing a self which is not actual self-consciousness, not yet an *experienced* I. But in Hegel there can be no such immediacy. What we go on to observe is how the relation of recognition actually *appears* to self-consciousness. Its reciprocal nature will turn out to be instead a lack of equality between the two, a fractured middle of identity and otherness. We will see that as social relation 'the whole of mutual recognition is present ...being for self and being for another, but not as it is in and for itself, or as the middle term' (Tubbs, 1997: 160).

## Life and Death

Let us begin again. Self-consciousness as immediate individuality is 'absolute mediation' (Hegel, 1977: 115) in the sense that its 'essence and absolute object is 'I'' (Hegel, 1977: 113), and this to the 'exclusion from itself of everything else' (Hegel, 1977: 113). It is the *natural* setting of the I which is certain of itself and self-sufficient in the 'negatively characterised object' (Hegel, 1977: 113) of sense certainty and perception which is determined as life. In this immediacy self-consciousness is opposed to all that is not itself and so, as Kojève writes, is a 'particular-and-isolated individual' (Kojève, 1980:10). But the other is also an individual. At first, each is *for the other* merely this shape of individuality, an object within the rest of the objects of life. Self-consciousness is thus self-certainty but is yet to be recognised as a being-for-self and so as objectively true. It is not yet the 'purely negative being of self-identical consciousness' (Hegel, 1977:113). But according to the concept of recognition it is only possible to be such an objective truth when each individual 'in its own self through its own action, and again through the action of the other' (Hegel, 1977: 113) is

already 'for the other what the other is for it' (Hegel, 1977: 113). But this is not what characterises the moment for they have not yet shown themselves to each other as more than just a shape of life, as 'the movement of absolute abstraction' (Hegel, 1977:113).

This means that there is no pure middle where each is already the exchanging of determinateness in and as the other. The moment for recognition proper is already lacking and in fact can only be a presupposition by independent self-consciousness. Self-certainty appears in opposition to the other. It is this independence that each seeks to raise to its truth. Thus being-for-self must prove that it is not attached to finite life *per se*, to the 'individuality common to existence' (Hegel, 1977: 113). The self-certain I is a division from the universality of immediate life and thereby any particular existence within it. The reciprocal nature of the relation is thus instead the twofold activity whereby each seeks the death of the other for the other is just an immediate shape of life. But this means that at the same time each is a 'staking of its own life' (Hegel, 1977: 113).

The nature of their relation as simple independence is thus activity and risk, for relation is the struggle with death to avoid death, in order to assert freedom over and against the other. It is the element of risk here that raises freedom to its truth as a being-for-self. And risk is already its vulnerability. Truth is the positing of itself as the 'negative being of self-identical consciousness' (Hegel, 1977:113) It knows that 'there is nothing present in it that cannot be regarded as a vanishing moment' (Hegel, 1977:114), but crucially, that essential being is more than the negative of immediate existence. Recognition pertains to the *person* who has risked death and who posits freedom as self-relation. This is why the other self-consciousness is not valued in the life and death struggle. It generates a self-externality which is only immediate consciousness, precisely what is negated as the truth of being-for-self. Immediate consciousness is now known to be either unessential self-externality or absolute negation.

What we can see here is that the truth of self-conscious existence, recognition as a person, presupposes not only a dialectical struggle between self and other, but also the independence of life which is free from death. The beginning we make with self-consciousness in the immediate expanse of life is one therefore which presupposes the person who knows freedom to be not death and not the other. The problem with this is that the concept of the person presupposes prevailing political relations. The concept of recognition itself therefore is already the result of misrecognition. For Kojeve, what the life and death struggle proves is that 'human reality is created, is constituted, only in the fight for recognition and by the risk of life that it implies' (Kojeve, 1980:12). It seems that the life and death relation appears to be the first experience which yields the recognition which is unequal as a social relation. But what we have learned is that life's relation to death and the other, is

already a particular shape of freedom, the one which is mediated by the death which it is not. And if the struggle against death is for recognition, then the struggle is one posited by abstract reflective consciousness raising the illusion of property relations to the rational principle of the whole. This is the reflective consciousness of Kant and Fichte and their natural law theories which Hegel's philosophy criticises. Death was meant to show that life in its immediate and natural existence is not the essence of self-consciousness and in risking itself it certainly showed that it 'held it of no account' (Hegel, 1977: 114). But for the resulting person life is preserved but now known to be a *natural* independence from death. But in this shape of freedom - from natural life, death and from self-externality - death is unable to have the essentiality that life has attained because death is only dependent on life. Recognition therefore is of, and for, the person who is life as not death and thus 'death remains without the required significance of recognition' (Hegel, 1977: 114).

In this result each self-consciousness no longer knows itself as an unmediated independence. They now recognise each other as free persons in relation but that which unites them as relation is a 'lifeless unity' (Hegel, 1977: 114). They are independent selves who in the process of recognition have misrecognized or not yet learned the dynamics of their actual relation as mediation. They only 'leave each other free ...indifferently, like things' (Hegel, 1977: 114), unable to know how the experience of negation is the life and truth of the relation and of their freedom. Mediation is now posited as, but also by, abstract self-consciousness, an abstract self-assertion which is not a negation preserved as self-determining freedom in otherness. In fact, such a mutual recognition is already an impossibility. It is only known by us as already the failure of mutual recognition, for we are the 'splitting-up of the middle term into the extremes which, as extremes, are opposed to one another, one being only recognised, the other only recognising' (Hegel, 1977: 112-3).

The problem that we have with any notion of a pure middle, argues Tubbs, is that it can only be viewed by our subjective consciousness 'as particular self-knowledge' (Tubbs, 1997: 153). We cannot, as subjectivity, know the universal from the point of view of the universal without its collapse into the particular. Kojève's uses of the term 'choice' to explain the assertion inherent in mutual recognition betrays precisely this presupposition of subjectivity, an experience of contradiction which has no place in a pure middle. But this is also the difficulty of phenomenological experience, that we must journey with what we are not, with what is not actual, from the point of view of its actuality.

What the life and death struggle has shown then is that self-consciousness is the broken middle of self-relation, for in its being-for-self it is also the consciousness which is for another. Both are essential moments but posited as unequal; 'the former is lord, the other is bondsman' (Hegel, 1977:

115). But in this immediacy of master and slave, what they actually are in relation they are yet to learn.

## Master and Slave

We have gone full circle with the simple I and arrived at the point where self-consciousness is no longer just the concept of being-for-self but is now explicitly for itself in the world and as such is master. But this is only because it is now a mediated self-consciousness. It knows that it exists as an other and that it is immediately in a relation to others. But the thinghood in which it finds itself is not its being-for-self but merely its being-for-another and so in this way thinghood is posited by the master as a servile and dependent consciousness. The master is in a relation both to 'an object of desire, and to the consciousness for which thinghood is the essential characteristic' (Hegel, 1977:115). The concept of being-for-self is now objectively a mediated self, the self which posits its own independent standpoint as essential and its dependent consciousness as merely unessential. The nature of its relation to thinghood and the slave is as follows.

Existing as an independent thing, the master mediates his relation to the slave by putting thinghood between them, precisely what holds the slave in subjection, 'the chain from which he could not break free in the struggle' (Hegel, 1977:115). In this way the slave only 'posses[es] independence in thinghood' (Hegel, 1977:115). The master sustains his power over this thing for it has proved in the life and death struggle that it is nothing in itself and that it can vanish at any moment. But because the thing is power over the slave, the master, through the thing, is able to 'hold[] the other in subjection' (Hegel, 1977:115) as a merely dependent consciousness.

But the master is also a mediated relation to the thing through the slave, so that he sustains pure independence. But being a dependent existence the slave relates himself negatively to the thing and 'takes away its independence' (Hegel, 1977:116) as a being-for-self, thus being the relation which is nothing in itself. But because 'there must be this other' (Hegel, 1977:109) for it is the master's mediation, the slave cannot get rid of it completely and so 'produces the object again' (Hegel, 1977:109). Its 'negative relation to the object' (Hegel, 1977:115) means therefore that 'he only *works* on it' (Hegel, 1977:116). Thus for the master, his immediate relation to thinghood is mediated by the slave's work which reproduces independent life as much as it negates it so that the master is able to take the object as 'sheer negation' (Hegel, 1977:116) and achieve self-satisfaction in having only the dependent aspect of the thing to enjoy. This is how the master keeps the slave in subjection.

In both of these mediated moments the master achieves recognition as a person by the fact that the slave is the work of his 'specific existence' (Hegel, 1977:116). The slave acts to 'set aside its own being-for-self' (Hegel, 1977:116) for the self-certainty of the master. But the action is not the two-fold action of a reciprocal recognition for action by the slave really only belongs to the essential action of the master who has determined the slave's existence. Recognition is 'one-sided and unequal' (Hegel, 1977:116).

But once again, it is the experience of the relation that we are observing and thus the dialectical nature of its experience. What we see is that recognition is, in actual fact, an independence which is dependent. The contradiction is already present for us in observing the dual natured beginning of being-for-self. The master's mediation turns out to be the opposite of what he took it to be. This inevitably yields an uncertainty for the master for the truth of self-conscious experience lies with the slave. But the slave is still a servile other to the master because this is the nature of recognition, the reality of self-consciousness as a person. Even as the master experiences uncertainty, the slave is not yet for the master, its own self. But it will become the truth of the master through the slave's own work and negativity which will turn out to be the 'truly independent consciousness' (Hegel, 1977:117).

Looking at self-consciousness now from the point of view of the slave, we can see that it has the master 'for its essential reality' (Hegel, 1977:117). He is only being-for-another, merely the work of the master who represents a freedom external to servitude. For the slave, the master is the 'sheer negative power for whom the thing is nothing' (Hegel, 1977:116). His own work and negativity are only for the master who then posits being-for-self over and above unessential life. But what the slave is as an external truth is implicit in the slave who has already experienced absolute negativity in the life and death struggle. In fear, 'its whole being has been seized with dread' (Hegel, 1977:117). Fear and the experience of being nothing are thus a part of the slave 'in principle' (Hegel, 1977:117). And what is implicit is also actual in the work to bring about the 'dissolution of everything stable' (Hegel, 1977:117). The negative moment of the master's being-for-self is thus not only implicit but explicit for the slave in his work and as his object. Self-consciousness is only being-for-self in this totality of fear and loss which belongs only to the slave.

But the slave still does not know that his work is the truth of self-consciousness. Fear is certainly 'the beginning of wisdom' (Hegel, 1977:117), the path of the negative back to the door of the master, but only in work can the slave 'become conscious of what it truly is' (Hegel, 1977:118). We saw that in the experience of self-consciousness as desire the slave was posited as the unessential relation to thinghood and that as such the master achieved its 'unalloyed feeling of self' (Hegel, 1977:118). The

master could completely negate thinghood without having to work. But it is only a feeling, a 'fleeting' (Hegel, 1977:118) satisfaction, a purely subjective interest and consumption on the part of the master who can only negate and reproduce immediate desire again. In contrast to the slave, the master, because he does not work, cannot have anything outside of himself which is stable and so he cannot achieve for himself any abiding meaning in the world.

It is only in the work performed by the slave that immediate desire is 'held in check' (Hegel, 1977: 118), the object formed (*Aufhebung*) and shaped (*Bildung*) as 'something permanent' (Hegel, 1977: 18). Work is the truth of self-conscious existence. The slave shapes the world and therein himself whereby he becomes an object to himself in and as a slave. Ultimately, it is the *education of consciousness* about itself for it 'comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its own independence' (Hegel, 1977: 118). Kojève writes that 'work transforms the World and civilizes, educates man. The man who wants to work – or who must work – must repress the instinct that drives him "to consume" "immediately" the "raw" object' (Kojève, 1980: 24). The truth of this learning belongs to the slave. But he is still work and service and not master. The object remains his work for labour and servitude is the relation. In this way the slave 'forms things and the World by transforming himself, by educating himself; and he educates himself, he forms himself, by transforming things and the World' (Kojève, 1980:25). This is perhaps the key educational element that we see Williams and Tubbs retrieving in their analyses of social and political actuality. They show that the work of immediacy and mediation and the education to know mediation in and as social and political freedom, is the truth of a freedom which is always risking its own negation for truth.

It is the *relation* between slave and object therefore that constitutes independent self-consciousness as the truth of self-relation. Self-consciousness is the 'formative activity' (Hegel, 1977:118) of the simple I who's positing of itself as independent self-consciousness belongs only to the work of the slave. In this truth, no longer is work merely 'alienated existence' (Hegel, 1977:119). The slave is rather work and the negative known in and for itself as self-consciousness.

But we must not forget the groundlessness and vulnerability of this truth. For in discovering that it is something, the slave is, at the same time, something as nothing. But this is now an 'objective negative moment' (Hegel, 1977:118), writes Hegel, the negative which causes itself and so it thus a determinate negation. The slave, who has 'trembled in every fibre of its being' (Hegel, 1977:117) is the self-consciousness which knows what it is in-and-for-itself. When being-for-self posits itself it is the slave that becomes 'someone existing on his own account' (Hegel, 1977: 118). In this dialectic we can see that the truth of self-consciousness belongs to the slave for the master's independence

turned out to be a dependent consciousness, 'the reverse of what it wants to be' (Hegel, 1977:117) whilst the slave's dependent existence turns out to be 'a mind of his own' (Hegel, 1977:119).

All of these moments of master and slave constitute the necessity of self-conscious freedom. The fear of death must be more than a formality for it is the absolute vulnerability of consciousness expressed as service to the master. If it experiences 'some lesser dread' (Hegel, 1977:119) negativity would remain an external, abstract consciousness and not 'its substance...through and through' (Hegel, 1977:119). This would create only a 'self-centred attitude' (Hegel, 1997:119) which lacks the consciousness of its own negative life in otherness. And unless it is also the forming activity of the slave to cultivate the self and object it is not 'genus as such, or genus as *self-consciousness*' (Hegel, 1977: 110). Fear remains a purely private experience unable to realise itself as self-consciousness in the 'real world' (Hegel, 1977:119) of others.

Freedom is thereby still attached to mere being and 'enmeshed in servitude' (Hegel, 1977:119). In its immediacy as a master and slave relation, it shows itself to be nothing but 'self-will' (Hegel, 1977:119) because it must assert itself as free from dependent life and the other. The I here is not actual being-for-self or a universal concept of freedom as such because its unity in otherness is not yet 'a nature that is objective and intrinsic to it' (Hegel, 1977:119). It is a return out of otherness and in seeing itself as an object, self-consciousness sees merely the master who exists as being-for-self. But the *Phenomenology* goes on to observe the dialectical experience of this self-consciousness, which at first, appears in a stoical shape of abstraction, an I which is pure being-for-self. This is the I that has not yet 'develop[ed] its own difference' (Hegel, 1977: 119) so that the moments of being-for-self and being-for-another fall apart as dialectical education. This separation goes on to structure the experience and evolution of self-consciousness from stoicism and scepticism through to the internalisation of the master and slave relation in the unhappy consciousness, the conceptual movement which emerges as self-conscious reason. These shapes of master and slave will not be explored further here. Instead, I want to turn to the *Science of Logic* to explore the way in which reflective consciousness as essence, experiences itself as illusion. In doing so, we will see how illusion is self-determining as notion. We will consider in what sense this self-determination is a comprehensive and higher education for philosophical consciousness.

## Part Two

### Illusory Being



‘To comprehend *what is*, this is the task of philosophy, because what is, is reason’ (Hegel, 1967:11).

We have seen above how the experience of recognition turns out to be actual as the master and slave relation of self-consciousness. Hyppolite famously read this to be the story of the slave whose truth overcomes the relation because ‘the inequality present in the universal form of recognition is thereby overcome, and equality reestablished’ (Hyppolite: 1974:172). The education of the slave, for Hyppolite, becomes the fate of the master and slave relation as the realisation of universal freedom. This is not the reading that I have presented here. The concept of freedom, I have argued, cannot be mutual, for recognition always presupposes the life and death struggle of property relations. When we reach the stage of modern abstract reason, which is not explored here, the master and slave relation is internalised in the one person as subject so that in modern social relations all are masters. But all this means is that the slave is no longer visible. Put simply, modern reason is not aware in what sense it is negative so that we misrecognise once again the nature of self-relation. In chapter five, we will see how Tubbs understands this lack of visibility through the concept of the veil, the mask of a modern freedom which hides its presuppositions and therein its relation to death and the other.

In the *Science of Logic*, the master and slave of modern reflective consciousness, is made the content and form of self-education, which as we will see, is the education of positing and presupposing consciousness. In Hegel, it is the standpoint of illusory being (*Schein*), the reflective consciousness which does not recognise its own contingency within a prior form and content of experience so that it carries its inner life abstractly and as the re-presentation of prevailing social and political relations. Modern subjectivity is this standpoint of illusion. In the *Logic* however, illusion learns about itself because it is its own form and content. Illusion or self-relation comes to know its truth as substance which is subject, in the sense that spirit is now ‘self-reflective’ (Tubbs’, 2004:32). This is the meaning of the notion in Hegel and is also the absolute significance that illusion carries in and for itself as truth. In what follows, I will explore the logic of self-relation in which essence ‘appears’ (*Schein*) as ‘what is’. It mirrors, I argue, what has been explored above to be the notion of experience as master and slave in the *Phenomenology*.

In Hegel, essence (*Gewesen*) refers to all the determinations of reflection. When we ordinarily speak of essence we take it to be knowledge of the essential nature or character of something, essence as the truth of being. But essence is not an immediacy we can take for granted, but rather the result of the movement of being to essence. In this way, essence is reflection, or more specifically, it is ‘the reflection-into-self of its determining [which] converts itself into ground and passes over into

Existence and Appearance' (Hegel, 1969:393). Stephen Houlgate writes that reflection in the *Logic* is not just an operation of the mind upon its objects, but the 'ontological structure' (Houlgate, 2011: 142) of being itself, what being 'proves to be at a certain point in its logical development' (Houlgate, 2011: 142). We are thus in the realm of a reflective movement which has its own logic and this makes it interesting for the thesis for logic retrieves its own truth as notion and therein its substantial education. It is this logic of reflection which we will now pursue.

Essence in its simple immediacy sublates being and arrives at the 'truth of being' (Hegel, 1969: 389) so that essence is 'other than being itself' (Hegel, 1969: 389) or rather the in-and- for-itself of being. The realm of determinate being in the *Logic* corresponds to natural consciousness in the *Phenomenology*. In the realm of essence, natural consciousness is reflective consciousness. Natural and reflective consciousness are two sides of the one consciousness. Both are abstract, in the sense that each is in an immediate relation to the object, and even though reflective consciousness knows this natural relation to be mediated or essence, it takes itself to be the unity of being and essence and does not see how it repeats the dualism.

At first, essence is merely 'sublated being' (Hegel, 1969: 394), the negation of immediacy in general and in this way it is 'simply affirmative' (Hegel, 1969:394) essence. It does not yet know itself as essence and so is not yet a determinate reflection, not yet essence which is 'determinate within itself' (Hegel, 1969: 398). Here it simply is. Being is negative but only in relation to essence which makes being 'determinate negation' (Hegel, 1969:394), something at the same time 'preserved and maintained' (Hegel, 1969:394), but only as a negative. Being and essence in this simply immediacy relate as others and are 'equal in value' (Hegel, 1969:394). Essence has not yet *posited* sublated being or the negative of immediate determinations as the negative otherness over which it sets itself as the authority. If being and essence are contrasted however, essence is the essential aspect and being the unessential. But this shows that not only can essence not escape the sphere of immediacy, but as immediacy it is not fully essence.

Determinate being is 'made the base' (Hegel, 1969: 394) therefore so that essence is the negating of this sphere of being to itself as non-being. It posits itself as simple existence (*Dasein*). We will see below that this positing of essence in the simple relation of essential and unessential being is in fact an external positing, a presupposing of that which must be independent of it so that it is truly a reflection into itself as a self-sublating immediacy. Essence is now the result of 'the absolute negativity of being' (Hegel, 1969:395) where being is 'in and for itself a nullity' (Hegel, 1969:395 emphasis removed), no longer 'infected with otherness' (Hegel, 1969:395). Determinate being is now 'a non-essence, illusory being' (Hegel, 1969: 395).

But what does this mean for essence to not be immediacy when it still 'appears' as such? First of all, essence is this reflecting movement 'from nothing to nothing' (Hegel, 1969: 400) from the negation of being to its own self as a non-being. Essence which is illusory being is the 'negative posited as negative' (Hegel, 1969: 395), a nothingness which is, but only because this negative is essence's own ground. Illusory being 'is only by means of its negation' (Hegel, 1969:396) and return into essence.

But this posited negativity cannot give essence a content for it has only come from illusory being. It is not yet the 'infinite immanent movement' (Hegel, 1969: 399) of reflection which is in and for itself essence. Essence as illusory being is the activity which merely 'shines or shows within itself' (Hegel, 1969:391 emphasis removed) and so is 'inherently lifeless' (Hegel, 1969: 390), an appearance which is nothingness. Only when essence is determinate reflection, when it relates to a determinate external immediacy is it a self-sublating logic of the negative which thus has a content as determinate negation.

Tubbs writes that the concept of illusory being is difficult to grasp. This is because with essence, we are 'working with the negative and seeing how it comes to determine itself. Whereas determination with regard to natural consciousness or to being is to know it as a something' (Tubbs, 1997:116). We are in the whole of the movement of the negative 'to know something as nothing' (Tubbs, 1997:116). We are in the depths of the work and consciousness of the slave, whose work and service brings about the truth of essence or positing as negative. We now have to see how this reflecting movement is determinate.

Being is implicitly determinate but it is not yet explicitly so as essence. As illusory being it is essence's own negativity as a unity with itself and so is the mediated negation of essence or is being as merely an unessential moment, the 'illusory being of essence itself' (Hegel, 1969: 398 emphasis removed). As a moment then it contains 'an immediate presupposition, a side that is independent of essence' (Hegel, 1969: 397). But as we saw with the master, essence does not know the truth of the independence of being. In this division it is immediately sublated because it is already essence, or 'in itself a nullity' (Hegel, 1969: 397). Essence as illusory being is thus 'the immediacy of non-being' (Hegel, 1969: 397), essence's own negating power as 'absolute being-in-itself' (Hegel, 1969:397). Essence is being but only as illusory being or the non-immediate. As such illusion is 'reflected immediacy' (Hegel, 1969: 397), a purely mediated moment. This makes illusion 'the illusory being of essence itself' (Hegel, 1969: 398).

But its mediated immediacy means that essence is the 'identical unity of absolute negativity and immediacy' (Hegel, 1969: 398). Illusory being here, writes Hegel, 'is the negative that has a being,

but in an *other*, in its negation; it is a non-self-subsistent being which is in its own self-sublated and null. As such, it is the negative returned into itself, non-self-subsistent being as in its own self not self-subsistent' (Hegel, 1969: 398 author's emphasis). This is the self-relation of the negative which as being in-and-for-itself is at the same time 'over against itself' (Hegel, 1969: 398) as absolute sublation.

Illusion is thus the negative which is identical with itself in this movement and is thus essence which self-subsists as a determinate reflection. In this way essence is 'the reflection of itself within itself' (Hegel, 1969: 398). It is the movement of being within itself therefore which 'determines its immediacy as negativity and its negativity as immediacy' (Hegel, 1969: 399). It is being as a *becoming*, says Hegel. And being which is its own immanent movement is essence as determinate reflection, an immediacy which is, only as this movement from 'nothing to nothing' (Hegel, 1969: 400).

This means that the reflection which takes itself to be self-relation is always a determining in relation to illusion. This is important for how our thinkers in the thesis work to reveal the illusions which modern social and political relations hide, masking the actuality of the presuppositions they make as abstract reflection or critique. We will see how Tubbs does this in reference to modern fossil fuel freedom and in Williams, in his making visible the illusory nature of the narratives of freedom in Dostoevsky. But there is more to say about this determining reflection that it does not recognise about itself. This is that it is a positing and as such, the presupposed immediacy of its object from which it begins as external reflection, a presupposition that it makes in order that it knows itself as essence.

What we see is that the determinateness of essence or immediacy as the self-related negative is essence as a 'self-negating equality' (Hegel, 1969: 401), a 'being itself and not itself... in a single unity' (Hegel, 1969: 400). It is what it is not, says Hegel. But this immediacy however, is only 'as this relation' (Hegel, 1969: 401 author's emphasis), as return, and in this way it is a 'positedness' (Hegel, 1969: 401), the same positedness we have seen to be the illusory being of the beginning. This is the beginning that the master makes as a being-for-self, the illusion of reflective non-relation. The beginning that essence makes with being as a nothing in-itself is in actual fact, immediacy 'as a return or as reflection itself' (Hegel, 1969: 401). Illusory being whose truth is essence is already the movement of the negative, what we saw above to be the work of the slave. And because this is the positing from which reflection is the sublation of immediacy, it is what reflection presupposes, a sublation of its positing as presupposition. It is thus as a presupposing, that essence is self-sublating negativity; 'the manner in which it relates itself to itself, but to itself as the negative of itself' (Hegel,

1969: 401). Determinate reflection is 'an *absolute recoil* upon itself' (Hegel, 1969:402). In this purely negative dynamic it moves back and forth from itself in a dialectic of positing and presupposing. This is self-relation as self-externality, the appearance of essence as posited. As such it is external reflection.

External reflection begins with what is presupposed. But it does not concern itself with the nature of this other to be a negative or a mediated other because what is presupposed is already a self-reflected determination, already 'the infinite' (Hegel, 1969:403) over against the finite ground of determinate being. But this external reflection is still the movement of positing and presupposing. So its other must be sublated so that it can return to itself as essence. External reflection is already 'determining reflection' (Hegel, 1969: 404). This means that 'what reflection does to the immediate' (Hegel, 1969: 405) is immediacy's 'own proper being' (Hegel, 1969:405), its own work of the negative to be nothing. This is the same movement we observed in the master and slave dialectic, that what the master does to the slave, is already the slave's own setting aside of being-for-self.

Determining reflection yields 'reflected determinations' (Hegel, 1969: 405) and these are essences as external reflections. As such they are determinations 'absolute, free, and indifferent towards each other' (Hegel, 1969: 405). In the same way that the life and death struggle saw two self-consciousnesses leave each other free like things, here too, determinateness is the abstract reflection in which essences are in a relation of thinghood and indifference. What is other does not undermine reflection's unity with itself for it is immediately a sublated other or illusory being, that which is merely posited. It is positedness then which constitutes the 'middle term' of the self-relation of reflection, the relation between immediacy and mediation as always the 'broken middle' of reflection as abstraction. But it is this positedness which is now 'essential' (Hegel, 1969: 407) as a negative. The determinations of reflection now appear in their infinity as 'free essentialities' (Hegel, 1969: 407), the transitoriness of being 'brought into subjection' (Hegel, 1969: 407) as illusion. 1969:407). This is an external and determining reflection as identity and identity as difference. But 'the differences are simply posited, taken back into essence' (Hegel, 1969: 408).

What at first appears to be the two sides of reflection - posited being as 'non-being' (Hegel, 1969: 408) in contrast to essence, is reflection as 'an immanent determining' (Hegel, 1969: 407) in which the differences are not differences. But what is posited is the negative reflected back into itself giving it independence, that which the slave cannot break free from in the struggle, but which the master enjoys as sheer negation.

The determinations of reflection are thus '*the relation to its otherness within itself*' (Hegel, 1969:408), the work of the slave who is nothing in himself. This means that the determinations of reflection, in which essence is itself, become the ground of essence, the play of positing and presupposing as illusion. As such, it 'passes over into Existence and Appearance' (Hegel, 1969: 393) and essence which is appearance is actual. This is the speculative meaning of Hegel's proposition that 'what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational' (Hegel, 1967:10) for what is, is illusion. The doctrine of illusory being acknowledges that the illusion is real, but speculatively, it 'cannot be made into a principle of rationality' (Rose, 2009: 87) where it masks the experience of illusion, 'the way bourgeois relations... are mistaken for rationality' (Rose, 2009: 87). This is why speculative experience is also the education of abstract philosophical consciousness as well as natural consciousness. The *Phenomenology* and the *Logic* taken together are philosophy's 'own time apprehended in thoughts' (Hegel, 1967:11).

The moment of reflection in the *Logic* is thus 'from being into the Notion' (Hegel, 1969: 391), essence standing between the two as the positing of negation or the giving of determinate being to itself so as to exist. Essence gives to itself what it already is in itself and so is the notion (*Begriff*). But determine being is not yet in-and-for-itself and so is not yet the notion. Illusion in Hegel 'appears only in the *aporia* of its conditions of possibility, or as...actuality' (Tubbs, 2004: 26). For Tubbs, the relation of master and slave is the 'subject and substance of phenomenological experience' (Hegel, 1969: 26) or illusion as the 'culture of thought's relation to itself' (Tubbs, 2004: 26), a culture because it 'contains misrecognition as its own movement and determination' (Tubbs: 2004:26). This is why Rose argues that Hegel's philosophy is not a *Sollen*. Rather, 'read speculatively, [it] indicates the conditions under which philosophy becomes effective' (Rose, 2009:88).

## The Notion as Education

This section explores the notion in Hegel with a specific emphasis on its educational movement. This, I argue, will help us to understand the way that both Tubbs and Williams, in different ways, work with the actuality of truth in relation to the illusions of modern reflective subjectivity. I will also take this to the theory of modern metaphysics in Tubbs, which, in chapter two, we discussed in relation to the question of first principles. This is because the Hegelian notion, as read by him, re-forms the modern reflective mind's relation to truth and does so in and as comprehensive education.

The question raised for this chapter with respect to the doctrine of essence is, if reflective consciousness is illusion, then what does this mean for our knowing of truth? We have already learned that truth is not what reflective consciousness at first takes it to be. But there is equally no

'replacement' version of truth that can be stated. What the *Science of Logic* does is to let the experience of truth and of the *aporia* of reason's thinking about truth in a dialectic of enlightenment, 'speak for itself (Tubbs, 2009: 122). In this way, logic, as the immediacy and mediation of immediacy and mediation, is the *notion* of truth in Hegel and is the idea of the system.

But any assertion of truth is problematic in Hegel, as he knew to his own cost. To assert the nature of the true as notion is just as much to possess truth as though it were a 'minted coin' able to be 'picked up and pocketed'. This is precisely what we cannot do without hiding the actuality and the experience of truth as notion. As he writes, 'what the nature of the Notion is, can no more be stated offhand than can the Notion of any other object' (Hegel, 1969: 577). This is why Rose argues that Hegel's system is the whole which cannot be known abstractly but only as it is experienced, hence the fundamental import of speculative experience. 'Let me then shoot from a pistol' (Rose, 1996: 72) by 'giving you *the results*, not the experience' (Rose, 1996: 74).

Phenomenological consciousness, when it enquires into the truth of its knowing, observes the contradictory path of natural consciousness. But what in phenomenological consciousness 'counts for it...as the loss of its own self' (Hegel, 1977: 49) and its continued reproduction of the object, becomes form and content as substantial philosophical education in the *Logic*. Reflection, in making its own relation to the object, an object, learns that it is a positing and a presupposing and that truth is always illusory being. This becomes another important education about truth. In *History of Western Philosophy*, Tubbs shows how the relation between thought and truth in-itself has structured the metaphysical tradition since Aristotle. In chapter two it was shown in what sense it was re-formed from the NeoPlatonic logic of first principles to the aporetic logic of Kant and Hegel. I will now pursue the significance of this in Tubbs, in relation to the Hegelian notion, what he argues to be philosophy's higher education into the nature of truth in-itself.

## Modern Metaphysics

When NeoPlatonic logic reaches Kant and the Copernican Revolution, thought now looks to understand itself. It knows itself to be the mediation of the object and so no longer posits itself as what Tubbs calls a culture of error<sup>51</sup>. By exploring the conditions of the possibility of our experience of objects Kant argued that 'without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding, no object would be thought' (Kant, 1968: 93). And so famously he said 'thoughts without contents are empty, intuition without concepts are blind' (Kant, 1968: 93). Kant's transcendental logic knew truth to be mediated. But Tubbs argues that Kant's logic is also medieval

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<sup>51</sup> Tubbs' definition of culture in Hegel is briefly described in chapter two.

because it rests on the 'transcendental logic of forms that are uncorrupted and uncompounded by particular matter' (Tubbs, 2009:116).

Kant holds on to the law of non-contradiction here so that these universal rules are the criteria for what counts as truth in the world of particular objects. But because this logic expounds the *a priori* principles of the understanding, it acknowledges that the conditions of the possibility of non-contradiction are 'logic in their own right' (Tubbs, 2009:117). It can be said that Kant looks both ways, says Tubbs, to a medieval logic of non-contradiction and to the logic of mediation as truth. In this way Kant makes the modern turn, for 'thought can be its own logical form and content' (Tubbs, 2009:116). It means that the truth of the logic of pure reason is non-contradiction because it rests in the *a priori* realm of pure forms and *a posteriori*, logic grounded in the object for its content, a relation which is always contradiction. Thus 'the logic of thought is always correct, the error is restricted to the thinking of objects' (Tubbs, 2009:117).

For Kant, transcendental logic (analytic) yields *a priori* concepts and principles 'without which no object can be thought' (Kant, 1968: 100). But knowledge itself is *a posteriori* and so the transcendental logic contains a dialectical realm which prevents pure reason from stepping 'beyond its own sphere of validity' (Tubbs, 2009:117). Mediation then has learned that it is no longer error in relation to the truth of the object, but, that the object conforms to the understanding whose criterion of truth rests on *a priori* principles. Kant is the 'great destroyer' arguing that 'objects must conform to our knowledge' (Kant, 1993:15) in contrast to all hitherto attempts to make knowledge conform to objects.

Metaphysics is no longer the positing of the contradictions of thought as error in relation to the truth. In fact, because *a priori* rules are what the object conforms to, 'they are what make experience comprehensible' (Tubbs, 2009:117) and so are objectively valid 'in a synthetic *a priori* judgement' (Kant, 1968:194). Tubbs argues that Kant 'tries to separate the logic and truth of thought from its illegitimate extension to the knowledge of objects' (Tubbs, 2009:118). Kant 'finds truth in thought itself' (Tubbs, 2009:118) which makes it a radical overhauling of the Western philosophical cultures of error.

But, Kant does not go as far as the logic requires. There is one 'further culture of error' (Tubbs, 2009:118). For Kant, knowledge is always conditioned. Thought cannot transcend experience. Whatever it thinks, is already object and thus within the realm of experience. This includes the unconditioned which it cannot think without falling into contradiction. Kant posits truth as the unconditioned so that *a priori* knowledge is limited to appearance. It seems as if the 'infinite



reduction' (Tubbs, 2009:118) of truth to thought is ultimately too risky. It posits too far in the direction of the whole as being contingent.

The unconditioned cannot therefore be thought without contradiction and yet the transcendental logic collapses this problem because by its logic the unconditioned conforms to its being known as such. For Kant, this makes logic 'the negative condition of all truth' (Kant cited in Tubbs, 2009:118). But because negation is other to truth in-itself, this negativity cannot be true. This is the difference that Hegel's logic makes to Kant's critical philosophy. In the end, 'Kant's transcendental logic is mediaeval and modern. It is the modern philosophical version of metaphysics that knows that God exists but not what God is' (Tubbs, 2009:118). It is the thinking which thinks itself and discovers 'its own groundless foundation' (Tubbs, 2009:119) but posits contingency as still error. Kant's transcendental logic has no actuality, argues Tubbs, an actuality 'as recollection in the conditions of the possibility of experience' (Tubbs, 2009:119). Instead it remains within a dialectic of thought and that which negates thought, without comprehending this dialectic as its own truth.

## Kant and Hegel

It is in Hegel, argues Tubbs, that truth, in its negation 'asks to be understood' (Tubbs, 2009:120). In the *Science of Logic* we see that the errors that Western history makes in presupposing that thought conform to its object is repeated by Kant's abstract philosophical consciousness because 'truth cannot conform to its being known' (Tubbs, 2009:120). It misrecognises that the experience of negation can be its own truth. Hegel completes the metaphysical turn by way of the Hegelian notion. It is the notion which allows the *aporia* of thought's thinking itself to have learning as its own logic and truth. The form of thought 'when thus thought out into its purity, will have within itself the capacity to *determine* itself, that is, to give itself a content... in the form of a system of determinations of thought' (Hegel, 1969:63). The notion is the form of phenomenological experience become content as 'actual self-determination' (Tubbs, 2009: 122). For Hegel, it is the task of philosophy 'to provide the Notion' (Hegel, 1977: 48). But this is no easy task. Reflective consciousness is already truth as 'ossified material...[so that] the problem is to render this material fluid and to re-kindle the spontaneity of the Notion in such dead matter' (Hegel, 1969:575). And abstract consciousness will always attempt to resolve the ensuing contradictions into the immediacy of 'solutions and appeasements' (Hegel, 1991:35). But the one thing we can be certain of in Hegel is that 'thought will trouble it thoughtlessness' (Hegel, 1977:51). Contradiction is inevitable.

Truth as notion, is thus 'the *absolute foundation*, yet it can be so only in so far as it has *made* itself the foundation' (Hegel, 1969:577). Hegel's philosophy acknowledges the determinations of

reflection as real, but, grasped in the logic of an immediacy which 'must have made itself immediate through the sublation of mediation' (Hegel, 1969:577). The notion is the third partner of immediacy and mediation, where immediacy and mediation are its 'moments of...becoming' (Hegel, 1969:577) and where the notion is equally 'their *foundation* and *truth* as the identity in which they are submerged and contained' (Hegel, 1969:577). The gravity of this insight in and as the 'labour of the notion' lies in its being the truth of substance as subject. Substance is the 'actuality that is in and for itself' (Hegel, 1969:578). For 'being is in and for itself only in so far as it is posited' (Hegel, 1969:580). Only as such is it substance. But this means that in this coming to know itself, substance is 'something higher, the *Notion*, the *subject*' (Hegel, 1969:580). It is substance's 'own immanent necessity and is nothing more than the manifesting of itself, that the notion is its truth, and that freedom is the truth of necessity' (Hegel, 1969:580).

Logic in Hegel is, we might say, experience experiencing itself as logic which is how it discovers the necessity of the notion as determinate negation. This is why the notion is the inevitable experience of the pathway of doubt because it knows contradiction and untruth to be negation and formation. The negative becomes notion when negation is self-determining in and as the experience of loss, contradiction, opposition and doubt. And these are the experiences which are given voice so powerfully in the work of Williams and Tubbs. We see it in their writings but also in the work that they do as priest and teacher. For Tubbs, the notion is the truth of education found most powerfully to be itself in the difficulties and risks of social and political experience thought through and struggled with. It is risked most deeply in the relation between authority and freedom in the teacher/student relation. For Williams, the notion is in the tensions between faith and secularism, God and man, self and other and in the actualities of a modern freedom whose losses and vulnerabilities are risked in order to do justice to their truth as formative.

But on this reading of the notion as education we need to understand that it is also the movement of the *Aufhebung*, as we will explore it in the next chapter. The term *aufhebung* tends to be translated 'to sublate'. In the *Science of Logic* Hegel writes that it has two meanings in the German language. The first is 'to preserve, to maintain' (Hegel, 1969: 107). But it is just as much 'to cause to cease, to put an end to' (Hegel, 1969: 107). In this sense then, that which is preserved for thought carries negation within it as its determination. It is the negation of immediacy and its being vulnerable to 'external influence' (Hegel, 1969: 107). But what is lost is also preserved. Immediacy is the result of mediation. The fact that sublation carries these opposing meanings is significant for Hegel's notion of the speculative. This is because both senses are carried in and by the conceptual landscape by which things are known. This is why we can read the movement of the notion as education and thus

as self-re-formation because the only way that something can be negated and preserved is if it is learning, and moreover, if it is a learning which learns about itself. We have to ask the question that, if you do not have the notion as learning then what is it that is preserved for our knowing?

Hegel writes in the *Shorter Logic* that both in the sphere of being, which passes over into opposition, and in the sphere of essence, which is reflection into itself, the notion is 'development' and the term he uses for this is *Entwicklung*. This is interesting for our educational reading of the notion because, as Tubbs argues in the next chapter, *Entwicklung* is one of the three educational concepts in Hegel. As development, it means that what is potential becomes actual in and as self-realisation. But we will see that along with *Bildung* (culture) they have their truth in the *Aufhebung*, the education which works within the abstract relation of consciousness to the object in-itself and within the relation of that relation as philosophical consciousness; 'truth is known in and as the form and content of the contradictory and inevitable conjunction of abstraction and mediation' (Tubbs, 2005: 157).

We can see then that the question of the notion in Hegel is the question of the speculative; what it means to speak about truth as system, or as the 'systematic exposition of the dialectical movement' (Hegel, 1977: 40) of the true. What is, is its own necessary movement of going forth from, and returning to, itself. To do justice to the notion, I argue, is to do justice to its work as education; 'the tremendous power of the negative...the energy of thought, of the pure 'I' (Hegel, 1977:19) that 'wins its truth only when in utter dismemberment, it finds itself' (Hegel, 1977: 19).

## Conclusion

What this chapter has attempted to do, is to read some of the key concepts in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, together with the doctrine of essence and the notion in the *Science of Logic*. It indicates the relation between experience as a master and slave structure, and logic, read as the master and slave of illusion. Along with Tubbs' argument for a theory of modern metaphysics, truth in Hegel as system is seen to be the education of the notion as it emerges in the experience of phenomenology and logic.

It is this picture of the notion which I argue is most helpful to our understanding of truth in both Tubbs but Williams, even though Williams does not write about the notion explicitly. Whilst this means that I am making rather large assumptions about its presence in his work, it is, I suggest, the speculative view of truth which underpins much of his later philosophical thought and his reading of Hegel, post-Rose. But before the thesis goes on to examine this in Williams, it is necessary to explore

the educational reading of these concepts in the work of Tubbs. I will do this with particular emphasis on the political implications of such a theory of education.

## Tubbs: *Education in Hegel*

*‘...your most sacred idea is death, that intimate friend’ (Rilke, 2005: 67)*

### Introduction

What is the nature of the relation between philosophy and education? This is the question asked by Tubbs at the beginning of *Education in Hegel*. He asks it, not because of a perceived lack of theorising about philosophy and education, or about the value placed on philosophy in education. Rather, that the most important part of the question has yet to be explored, namely, what is it that is truly educational about philosophical experience? The question in Tubbs is a challenge to both philosophy and education to know ‘what sort of education is being presupposed in any philosophizing that bids us to read it and to learn from it?’ (Tubbs, 2008: 1).

It is also a challenge to know the nature of the language of education that is used to describe the process of philosophical experience, language such as “transform”, ‘change’, ‘alter’, and ‘overcome’ (Tubbs, 2008: 1). The problem with such frequently used terms, he argues, is that they ‘tend only to erase the philosophical difficulty they represent’ (Tubbs, 2008: 1). And difficulty for Tubbs, as we have already indicated in chapter two, is the substance of philosophy as education and education as philosophy. The problem with any notion of philosophical experience that avoids the significance of difficulty misses not only the way in which philosophy is educational but also the absolute significance of its experience.

In what follows, I will examine Tubbs’ view of the difficulty of philosophical experience and the key Hegelian concepts that he works with to articulate it as a theory of philosophical education. Part one begins with a consideration of his reading of truth in Hegel. It then goes on to explore the three notions of education that he emphasises in Hegelian philosophical experience. In particular, his focus is on the concept of the *Aufhebung* and its place within a theory of education read as recollection.

Part two turns to the centrality of the life and death and master and slave relations in Tubbs’ reading of Hegel and their significance for a theory of self and other. Here, we will see how he brings a theory of education in Hegel to bear on some of the most important questions facing modern social and political relations, including that of the illusory nature of modern freedom. This will take us to his essay ‘Fossil Fuel Culture’, a particularly interesting theory of the philosophical, political and

educational implications of what he argues to be modern freedom's eschewal of death, the other and the universal. Running through the chapter as a whole is the question of the absolute significance of this theory of education.

## Part one

### Truth

As we have already seen in chapter two, Tubbs is working with a version of truth in Hegel which differs from both common sense views of truth and from what has ordinarily been taken for truth in the western philosophical tradition. This is the view of truth taken to be the in-itself or independent essence. But it is a concept of truth which Hegel argued 'presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it' (Hegel, 1977: 47). By the time we reach the Enlightenment, the in-itself is known to be mediation, but, as we saw, this gets reason into all sorts of trouble when it tries to think its own truth. The absolute becomes unknowable because truth 'can never be known in itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 3). Reason can still only know itself as error.

But, ask Hegel and Tubbs, what if the 'fear of falling into error...is not just the error itself' (Hegel, 1977: 47)? What if fear 'reveals itself rather as fear of the truth' (Hegel, 1977: 47)? For Tubbs, the philosophical experience of error yields a different understanding of truth. And so the *experience* of the absolute as substance in-itself is the experience that is just as much subject as substance. In Hegel, spirit is the whole of this movement of truth which is in-and-for-itself. Philosophical consciousness is thus the actuality of truth in its coming to be as philosophy, for it is our 'insight into what knowing is' (Hegel, 1977: 17).

It is the nature of this process that Tubbs is drawing our attention too, for the experience of philosophy in Hegel is nothing but the long and arduous one of education. It is education, because the determinations of consciousness are no longer in the form of the in-itself but are now the truth of its knowing as the 'recollected-in-itself' (Hegel, 1977: 17). Spirit observes its historical life as the very 'the energy of thought, of the pure 'I'' (Hegel, 1977: 19) and observes the negative life of what is. But it learns also that the negative is where spirit *lives*, where it 'endures and maintains itself' (Hegel, 1977: 90). Only by 'looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it' (Hegel, 1977: 19) says Hegel, does spirit learn that truth is substance as subject. In the preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel writes that 'truth is actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself' (Hegel, 1977: 10). Immediacy is already the mediation by

which it returns to itself, 'the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual' (Hegel, 1977: 10). The absolute becomes itself in its 'reflection in otherness within itself' (Hegel, 1977: 10). Reflection is 'a positive moment of the Absolute' (Hegel, 1977: 12) therefore, because the negative has 'made itself what it is in itself' (Hegel, 1977: 12) and the truth of this process is recollection.<sup>52</sup> Thus

'the True is the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose. Judged in the court of this movement, the single shapes of Spirit do not persist any more than determinate thoughts do, but they are as much positive and necessary moments, as they are negative and evanescent. In the whole of this movement, seen as a state of repose, what distinguishes itself therein, and gives itself particular existence, is preserved as something that recollects itself, whose existence is self-knowledge, and whose self-knowledge is just as immediately existence' (Hegel, 1977: 27-28).

It is this view of truth in Tubbs, experienced in and as the difficulty of phenomenological consciousness, that discovers not only that the absolute can be known but 'how the absolute is to be learned' (Tubbs, 2008: 3), how education is the truth of substance becomes subject. Tubbs reads the *Phenomenology* as an education about the truth of learning and the learning of truth, for we have, he argues, an experience of the experience of truth. Not only does natural consciousness lose the in-itself, but we do as well. It means that 'what is experienced negatively is the same thing that is doing the negating' (Tubbs, 2008: 3). We too, are caught in a dialectic of our own making.

The point for Tubbs is that the dialectical movement which thought exerts on itself has the significance of being not only the undermining of what is true for consciousness but also its re-formation. It is education which comes to know the truth of its knowing and so education which is truth. This is what recollection in Hegel teaches consciousness about itself and why Tubbs calls the whole of phenomenological experience in Hegel, the 'culture of thought's relation to itself, a culture which contains misrecognition as its own movement and determination' (Tubbs, 2004: 26) and thus re-formation. Negation is actual in the knowing subject whose knowing, '*knows itself*' (Tubbs, 2008: 3 author's emphasis) in this experience.

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<sup>52</sup> Hegel could see that philosophy in his time had become dry and that spirit had 'lost its essential life' (Hegel, 1977: 4) and that it was searching to recover the 'sense of solidity and substantial being' (Hegel, 1977: 4). Enlightenment reason had turned its attention away from the things of heaven, as he puts it, towards itself, and 'the eye of Spirit...held fast to the things of this world' (Hegel, 1977: 5). For Hegel the time had come for spirit to journey once again to comprehend its truth 'ripened to its properly matured form so as to be capable of being the property of all self-conscious Reason' (Hegel, 1977: 43).

Tubbs' reading of truth as education also forms the basis for his reading of the absolute. It is one which undermines the view of Hegel as the dogmatic philosopher of a totalising system of thought. Absolute knowing in Hegel, aware of its own processes, carries its own negation and vulnerability to the truth of this process, as education. The absolute *is* 'as learning' (Tubbs, 2008: 3), he argues, because it is 'the result *together* with the process through which it came about' (Hegel, 1977: 2 my emphasis).

The integrity of the absolute as a process of learning is that it is always working with, or we might say, learning of, its own complicity in that which it opposes. And rather than trying to overcome the abstractions that it cannot help but make, thinking which thinks its own abstractions 'comes to know them differently' (Tubbs, 2008: 4). This is why the absolute in Hegel cannot be abstracted from the conditions of the possibility in and by which it is known and experienced abstractly, for only abstraction can learn of its own standpoint as untruth. Education works with abstraction.

Tubbs finds the truth of philosophical experience to be the 'rigour of such education' (Tubbs, 2008: 5), a truth which 'lies in the risk of its unrest and in the struggle for the meaning of this unrest in human relations' (Tubbs, 2008: 5). The dialectic is never a return to the same, neither is it empty of content. It is determinate negation. And this is politically significant because we are compelled to find meaning in the *aporias* of political experience which cannot escape the totality of its political conditions.

Philosophy in Hegel does not allow itself to avoid all the ways in which it is other to itself and so crucially, does not 'presuppose the meaning of its self-opposition outside of the education it performs' (Tubbs, 2008: 4). But one of the central questions of the thesis has to do with the social and political implications of a speculative philosophy which seeks to comprehend the actualities of political experience but which does not offer a programme for political change. We will return to this problem throughout the thesis but at the heart of the work of Rose, Williams and Tubbs there is a deeply political education to be had in the asking of the question, one which does not allow for the comforts of a political imperative from which to speak without the experience of contradiction and thus of learning.

We might say that Tubbs' reading of truth retrieves for philosophy what it has so far failed to recognise about itself. At the beginning of *Philosophy's Higher Education* he remarks that to know philosophy as struggle and to know that struggle as formative is nothing new. But what philosophy has not yet understood is the absolute nature and significance of this learning. Hegel's philosophy, insists Tubbs, 'works in the full awareness of having education as its own essence, that is, as the very



substance of what it is and does' (Tubbs, 2008: 2). To explore this further, I want now to introduce the three notions of education that Tubbs draws attention to in Hegel. These are *Bildung*, *Entwicklung* and *Aufhebung*, of which the *Aufhebung* holds particular significance for a theory of education read as recollection.

## *Bildung*

*Bildung* is 'formation or development through the repetition of misrecognition' (Tubbs, 2008: 43). It is 'the meaning of culture in Hegel' (Tubbs, 2008: 43) most notably when the universal and particular are in opposition. It tends to refer to the development of the rational individual of civil society who recognises himself in the sphere of natural needs but as free from nature and from other individuals. But it is at the same time the experience of freedom as contradictory but one which is recognised to be the necessary element of its objectivity in the 'universality of the state' (Tubbs, 2008: 44). This developing comprehension of the opposition between the universal and particular individual is the 'labour of the concept' (Tubbs, 2008: 44) of the universal and so *Bildung* describes 'the process by which ethical life replaces natural need, and it is the maturation of the person from particular to universal, and of family to civil society and state' (Tubbs, 2008: 44).

But we also see that *Bildung* or the culture of 'rational universality' (Tubbs, 2008: 44) is that which sustains the dialectical nature of its oppositions within itself. In this way it constitutes the nature of political experience wherein attempts to reform existing social relations serve only to strengthen them. But because the contradictions are within itself, they are the individual who learns that 'nothing is quite as it seems' (Tubbs, 2008: 45): 'meaning and values are themselves inverted, or pass into their opposite' (Tubbs, 2008: 45). And so 'reform' is itself re-formed in this education. The totality of this 'disrupted individual' (Hegel cited in Tubbs, 2008: 45) is the 'authentic existent Spirit of this entire world of culture' (Hegel, cited in Tubbs, 2008: 45).

*Bildung* unsettles any neat programmes or demands for political change because such change cannot help but reveal to the reformer the 'domination of existing social relations' (Tubbs, 2008: 44). There is no immunity for political action from the hypocrisy of a politics which cannot help but practice the self-deceit inherent in the desire for and experience of reform. In the *Phenomenology*, *Bildung* is to be found 'in the totality of this predetermined formation and equally pre-determined re-formation' (Tubbs, 2008: 45). What returns as 'self-contempt' (Tubbs, 2008: 45) is the 'pure' culture' (Tubbs, 2008: 45) of the I which has learned that 'all universals are found culpable of self-interest... [so that] self-interest becomes the new universality' (Tubbs, 2008: 45). Culture in Hegel is the totality of the dialectic of enlightenment, but one in which the meaning of its dialectic is missed

or not made the *content* of an education about itself. *Bildung* is only 'recognition...as misrecognition' (Tubbs, 2008:46). Properly understood, the *logic* of *Bildung* in Hegel is the 'culture of culture' (Tubbs, 2008: 46). This is the meaning of the *Aufhebung* as the triune structure of the movement of the dialectic as determinate negation.

## *Entwicklung*

*Entwicklung* is translated as 'development'. It is taken to mean the 'unfolding and evolving of a story or drama' (Tubbs, 2008: 46). There are two principles involved: potentiality and actuality. The potential is like the seed which contains the whole of its formation within itself so that the seed is 'self-production' (Tubbs, 2008: 47). This means that potential is formative of itself. But more than this, it also produces a new seed, another potential, in a cycle of natural development. Actuality here is 'the existence of the potential' (Tubbs, 2008: 47). Reason's development in the unfolding of the human being however is a little more difficult, says Tubbs. The potential for reason is in all human beings. But the child is only potential reason. It is the adult who becomes actual reason. Reason's development is conscious education in contrast to the natural process of the seed. Reason must become aware of itself as reason if it to be actual but this disrupts its natural cyclical development. *Bildung* is the education as self-relation. It is part of, but also opposes *Entwicklung*, for *Bildung* 're-forms what is experienced, and negates therefore the initial formation' (Tubbs, 2008: 47). It is development as *Bildung* which asks the history of philosophy to observe itself, but therein disrupts the development and re-forms itself. There is however a third educational partner which comprehends the whole of the educative relation of *Bildung* and *Entwicklung*. This is education as the *Aufhebung* which comprehends their relation as 'self-(re)-formation' (Tubbs, 2008: 48).

## *Aufhebung*

The *Aufhebung*, argues Tubbs, is the 'most disputed term' (Tubbs, 2008: 48) in Hegelian philosophy because it is the essence of Hegel's thought as system. It was noted in chapter four that it tends to get translated as 'sublate'. But the problem with this is that sublation does not carry the educative weight of Hegel's philosophy. The movement of the *Aufhebung*, for Tubbs, allows us to think within the difficulty of the experience of natural consciousness as well as within the difficulty of the philosophical relation to the natural. In other words, it allows for a notion of 'radical contingency' (Tubbs, 2008: 49) where even the contingent (social, political and historical) nature of thought's relation to its object and to itself is known to be contingent. There is no standpoint immune from its presupposing of the relation it acknowledges. Only recollection, argues Tubbs, enables contingency's own formation and re-formation to be comprehended absolutely. What Tubbs discerns about the

*Aufhebung* is that it is the aporetic logic of what is, as also what is not. The *Aufhebung* is negation which knows itself. *Aporia* is thus the 'form and content of the contradictory and inevitable conjunction of abstraction and mediation' (Tubbs, 2008: 50).

This makes the *Aufhebung* in Hegel, the missing third partner of relation, that is, it is the relation of education to itself and so is the actuality of truth as recollection. This is a significant argument because it says that we can know truth 'within the relation of contingency to itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 50). Whereas critiques of contingency find themselves compromised by that which they critique, because, as we have seen, critique presupposes the relations it seeks to acknowledge, contingency in Hegel – of the natural and philosophical relation, makes itself the content of an education about itself. It is not overcome, neither is it not not-overcome, says Tubbs, because philosophical education cannot be abstracted from itself in this way. It finds its truth *only* as learning.

Drawing these three educational notions together Tubbs argues that *Bildung* in the *Phenomenology* 'prioritises the reform of the thinker' (Tubbs, 2008: 50) in negation, whilst *Entwicklung* 'prioritises... the *telos* of such changes' (Tubbs, 2008: 50) such that their relation is aporetic. The *Aufhebung* is the expression of the *aporia* of their relation as 'self-re formation' (Tubbs, 2008: 50).

## Recollection

The movement of the *Aufhebung* in Hegel has much significance for Tubbs' reading of recollection and its centrality in his argument for an educational reading of Hegel's philosophy. This is because, what it achieves for the relation between consciousness and its object, 'to know something as both an appearance and as the negation of appearance' (Tubbs, 2008: 50), is for it to be actual knowing in and as recollection. Negation is preserved because it is 'essentially a learning experience' (Tubbs, 2008: 50). This makes the object the movement of determinate negation, in recollection, the conscious insight into the untruth of what appears, become content.

The added dimension to this is that recollection is a knowing which is always other than itself, a knowing of that which is not, because it is only the recollected. But this is precisely the experience by which the loss of self exists *as* loss. In a difficult formulation of this, he writes that, 'one can *be* what one is *not* when one is learning about oneself' (Tubbs, 2008: 51 author's emphasis). Moreover, this learning is itself already the structure of recollection because what 'was' is recollecting itself and so is already what is. One of the most important elements of Tubbs' thinking here is that somehow we live the truth of recollection, in all of its risks, losses and vulnerabilities, when we are learning and when we know the truth of that learning to be already its recollection in us as changed human beings. It is because consciousness posits itself and recollects itself in various social and political

shapes of positing that recollection is social and political education, or rather, the way that social and political relations comprehend actuality.

Recollection is thus also significant for our knowing of God, for this knowledge too falls into the logic of self-relation and thus the movement of the *Aufhebung* which recollects its own truth in what is other. The immediacy of God as other is a simple recollection, in the sense that consciousness is aware of itself in this knowing. But for Tubbs, recollection is also that which recollects itself. In its experience of God, it knows its own negativity or 'loses itself to itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 53). The logic of non-contradiction in the western tradition has posited this groundlessness as error. God is unknowable. But in Hegel, because the negative has 'educational and philosophical substance' (Tubbs, 2008: 53) God is knowable in and as philosophical learning or we might say that, on this argument, God is recollection. This idea of God will be one of the points of possible divergence between Williams and Tubbs, although the extent to which Williams is working with a notion of God as philosophical learning is the question in the background and sometime the foregrounds of the whole thesis. As I will show in the next two chapters, the educational dimension of Williams' work presses him toward the language of a God who has something to do with this experience of learning. I will now pursue the structure of educational experience as it has been explored so far, in relation to Tubbs' reading of the life and death and master and slave relations in Hegel. It is a return to the reading of these relations given in chapter four, but now comprehended within the educational and philosophical perspective of Tubbs' project as a whole.

## Part two

### Life and Death

Modern consciousness, writes Tubbs, 'is not well educated regarding the relations that it expresses, or about the relations that are present in how consciousness understands itself in the world around it' (Tubbs, 2008: 6), the most important of these being its relation to death. In fact, the relation of life and death has taken various forms in the tradition but always depending on the way that 'life expresses its own certainty' (Tubbs, 2008: 162). But life has always been in relation to death and not free from it. In fact, death is the absolute lord, the chain from which consciousness could not break free in the life and death struggle. So in its actual life, life's certainty that it is not death, is always a

misrecognition that death is not in life. We thus become skilled in the 'exporting' of death and the exporting of negation as other to life. The shape of this modern freedom is the bourgeois master who exports 'fear, vulnerability and negation' (Tubbs, 2008: 6) as other, seen as external experiences rather than internal ones.

Tubbs draws our attention to the significance of this positing of fear as other. In Hegel, the experience of fear is that which brings us up against the awareness of death in life and so it is beginning of wisdom. Fear begets a journey in which life learns of its own truth in the unstable and disrupted unity of its self-conscious existence. But fear, argues Tubbs, is therein 'always a constituent of social and political life' (Tubbs, 2008: 6) in various forms. Social and political relations are a shape of life's relation to fear and death. It is at the core of Tubbs' philosophical thinking to retrieve the educational substance of this modern experience and importantly, the way in which the relation of life and death is 'the template for the social relation of self and other' (Tubbs, 2008: 7). It is a critique of the modern experience of 'self and other, rich and poor, master and slave, and West and East' (Tubbs, 2008: 7). Education in Hegel learns that consciousness is always 'presupposing a particular relation to death' (Tubbs, 2008: 7). It is thus 'our philosophical education about the spirit of the age' (Tubbs, 2008: 7), about the social and political actualities that are determined in and by our misrecognising of death.

In chapter four we saw that the beginning that we make with self-consciousness in the life and death struggle is already the presupposition that death is not in life. But this, Tubbs argues, is the politically and historically determined shape of the relation whereby 'we' are the life that has put itself over and against death as other. It means that 'the only way open for us to know death... is, from the perspective of life' (Tubbs, 2008: 24), from the certainty that death is other to the life which thinks it. But if death is absolutely other to life, which it appears to be, determining it as an in-itself, then we see that even the truth of death appears as unknowable. If life did know death, then, life would be *in* death which would negate the truth of death as absolutely other to life. For Tubbs however, death as other is also the illusion of the in-itself and so the positing of thought as unable to know what is in-itself. Phenomenology however, is able to 'think this error as its own truth' (Tubbs, 2008: 23) and discovers the truth of death to be in the life which thinks it. This has incredibly far reaching implications for our knowing of death, for we can see that if the education of consciousness is recollection, then recollection is life's being the death which it is not, the return of death to life in learning. What this looks like as a life 'lived' in relation to death, is one of the central questions for a theory of philosophical experience in Hegel.

From the point of view of life, the beginning of self-consciousness is two independent and self-certain individuals who in facing each other for the first time, experience an uncertainty as to who and what they are. This is a moment of vulnerability and exposure because each becomes aware that life as it is known is disintegrating. Read chronologically, writes Tubbs, the struggle which ensues between the two is one for recognition. Both seek to be recognised as free and independent by the other so that self-certainty has the truth it needs. But, Tubbs argues that this is a misreading of the struggle and another misrecognition of life and death because life is already that which has posited the 'origin from its own point of view' (Tubbs, 2008: 24), the view which takes death to be other than life. The concept of recognition presupposes the social and political actuality of a life which is not death, fear or being-for-another. To read the beginning as a struggle for recognition is to make prevailing social and political relations the beginning. We saw this in Rose to be the illusion of bourgeois relations seeking to raise the certainty of private property relations to their truth as the rational principle of the whole. But phenomenological consciousness can see that the beginning has forgotten or rather has not yet learned that its experience of death is the formation of a freedom from the other in and as the life which survives.

This is, for Tubbs, a challenge to those readings of Hegel which see this beginning as a mutual struggle for recognition. The concept of recognition presupposes the failure of recognition because self-consciousness is already the 'logic of self-relation' (Tubbs, 2008: 1). The point is that no pure middle of mutuality can be thought by the self of modern social relations without it being an 'imperialism of the middle' (Tubbs, 2008: 6), one which denies any implication in the political totality which it has presupposed. This goes to, for the 'middles' of post-foundational discourses which posit the middle as 'radical heterogeneity' (Tubbs, 2008: 6). These middles are just as much a 'mutuality of difference' (Tubbs, 2008: 6) and so an imperialism which asserts difference abstracted from the conditions of the possibility of difference which it presupposes.

Recognition is already misrecognition and any attempt to posit it abstractly as the truth of self-consciousness is to suppress the actuality of illusion. To think death is to be already the victor over it, the illusion which 'hide its presuppositions behind the freedoms they make possible' (Tubbs, 2008: 15). Tubbs urges us to read the life and death struggle not chronologically, but in and as recollection. Then we learn to see 'the complicity of the perspective of the victor in its account of its origin and its complicity in hiding this complicity in the account' (Tubbs, 2008: 24). Only education which is recollection can know the truth of the determination of any beginning because only here is death known by itself in the life which carries and comprehends it.

Making a brief but significant detour here, I want to show how Tubbs illustrates the subtleties of this further in a particularly compelling use of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, 'The Minister's Black Veil',<sup>53</sup> which shows something of the nature of the complicity of modern consciousness in the masking of the truth of death in life. What follows will be a summary of Tubbs reading of this story.

## The Veil

The Reverend Mr Hooper appears in church one day wearing a black veil over his face. It is never removed and he dies still wearing it. His wearing of the veil causes great unease amongst those he meets. People question his motive for wearing it. They are fearful and horrified and find themselves drawn to their most inner and troubled feelings of self when faced with the veil. In this sense, says Tubbs, the veil 'reveals far more than ever it conceals' (Tubbs, 2008: 17). And the effect of the veil is most striking 'in the darkest forces of terror and, significantly, of death' (Tubbs, 2008: 16-17).

But the many interpretations by his parishioners as to the wearing of the veil; that it is meant to reveal in others the sins they hide, or to be a retreat into the internal world, 'underestimates just how painful the revelations of the veil are to Hooper' (Tubbs, 2008: 17). It is his own agony of soul, for 'the veil reveals inwardness and the fear and trembling accompanying such inwardness...[and] as he is entombed in that 'saddest of all prisons, his own heart' (1987: 105), so he reveals that same prison in others who would prefer to avoid it' (Tubbs, 2008: 17).

What Tubbs draws from this story in relation to the life and death struggle is that 'the veil comes to symbolise death by reminding the parishioners of their existential form and of its fragility to investigation, and how, accompanying this fragility, is the darkness of what is not revealed about themselves' (Tubbs, 2008: 18). For Tubbs, the story illustrates how the experience of the veil reveals vulnerability to the individual of a modern abstract freedom. It 'reveals the presence of death in life to the masters' (Tubbs, 2008: 18). But there is further significance to the story. He argues that where the veil in the story reveals truth, in the face-to-face encounters of modern social relations, truth is instead hidden behind the illusion of visibility. The mutuality of formal equality offers 'the mutuality only of a deception shared by the participants' (Tubbs, 2008: 18). The educative significance of this illusion is that illusion revealed, marks the beginning of the modern subject's 'philosophical education ... [or] Know Thyself' (Tubbs, 2008: 18).

The veil is a powerful symbol both of illusion and education for Tubbs. In the story, it is the illusion within which death becomes a teacher for the life which hides it and therein for the social relations

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<sup>53</sup> See Hawthorne, N. (1967) *Great Short Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated

which determine it. The illusion that death is other to life is what education in Hegel unmasks, says Tubbs. But illusion is not overcome, for as we have seen in chapter four, "truth in Hegel is in illusion" (Tubbs, 2008: 23).

## Life and Death as Recollection

Read as recollection, the life and death struggle looks a little different than chronological readings. When immediate self-consciousness encounters another self, its certainty of being all reality is undermined because the presence of the other dismantles its exclusivity. It has not yet learned what otherness means for it. We know the simple I to be essentially desire and that the other, as life in general, stands in relation to desire as merely an object to be consumed in some way or another for the satisfaction of desire. But for Tubbs, this means that self-consciousness is already the life which has experienced negation because it is the desire to return to itself. Life in its immediacy is actually the life which desires 'the death of death' (Tubbs, 2008: 25), the negation of the experience of death which the other here represents. And so for Tubbs, death is already in the life which is desire, for desire is already the experience of the other as not itself, the death of that which undermines self-certainty.

So what does this mean for the encounter which we can now see is a relation between life and life, mediated by the death that is nothing? Tubbs observes that for the life which survives being killed, death bears no relation and neither does the other life: 'loss, death and other become other to this life which is now an 'I' (Tubbs, 2008: 25). The risk to be taken by life is thus the lesson in which it learns what it means to be the I, as not death. The struggle of the beginning is the immediacy which learns that it is the I of social and political relations, for it sees itself learning and knows this learning to be its own abstract consciousness.

In the struggle, self-consciousness learns that to be life is to be mortal and that life can experience death at any moment. But because it faces death and wins, it posits the illusion that life itself is not death. Its independence is constituted by making the presence of death the opposite of its own truth. This, argues Tubbs, 'is a crucial moment in the formation of life in and as the reflective subject who knows himself' (Tubbs, 2008: 26). Tubbs calls the experience, the 'fear-of-death-become-life-and-it's-other' (Tubbs, 2008: 25) because it is fear which makes death actual as other or the self-certainty proper that is its being an object to itself. Fear is integral to what will be the dialectical experience of self-consciousness and thus its coming to learn what it actually is.

This is why *Education in Hegel* argues that the relation that we have to fear, anxiety, risk and death is ultimately a question of how we learn. That there will be learning is not in dispute for the



educational and philosophical substance of experience is what Tubbs trusts above all else. But it is our philosophical experience of this learning that is significant. Not only will philosophical education teach us about our truth in relation to what we export as other. It is the education which becomes substantial as subject, a fundamentally social, political and religious learning because 'life's eschewal of death is the source of all otherness, and is the source also of its own political identity and certainty' (Tubbs, 2008: 25). So we can say that man's idea of himself, of his freedom, is also that which he has of death. And if man's idea of his freedom is also that which he has of God, then our relation to death is also the struggle within which we know God.

Through this argument, Tubbs constructs a theory of education which speaks in and to the *aporias* of the experiences of modern freedom which, he says, 'find themselves re-presenting a broken middle, but also determining that re-presentation in and by their own thinking' (Tubbs, 2005: 13). This is, of course, as we saw in *Hegel Contra Sociology*, the difficulty of thinking the conditions of the possibility of our object, the actuality which is already the presupposed object of our beginning with the world. The difference that the education of the broken middle makes, for Tubbs, is that whilst knowing re-presents dualism, in knowing itself it is also the truth of itself as re-presentation. This means that it can begin to understand itself in the difficulty of philosophical experience which is itself the education of that difficulty. Life and death are torn halves of this middle which do not add up, but which in their experience of the brokenness of the relation, can be the truth of their relation as learning. For Tubbs, this is the education of modern aporetic experience which lives its truth as spiritual learning.

The political implications of this, for Tubbs, are that we learn of the illusions of freedom and of our concepts of the universal, in the contingencies of social and political experience. Tubbs's insight here is that it is recognition of the contingencies of illusion, including our own that 'forms the substance of speculative enquiry' (Tubbs, 2005: 13). In this recognition, we can know one's mind as the substance of difference in and as the subject which experiences them. For Tubbs, and we will explore this broken middle as a philosophy of the teacher in the last chapter, when we are philosophical consciousness, we find ourselves 'in the broken middle of our experience of the relation' (Tubbs, 2005: 13). What we do with this experience is a question for philosophy, politics, religion and education.

## Master and Slave

'The life that is certain of itself is the political master' (Tubbs, 2008: 25).

'The life that must carry the death that the master has eschewed for himself is the slave' (Tubbs, 2008: 25).

The relation of master and slave in Hegel is now the shape by which life, death and the other is known. It is the actuality of 'the illusion that life is its own ground' (Tubbs, 2008: 26). But we must remember that master and slave here is both the self-relation of each individual as well as the relation between them determining them as two individuals. The *Phenomenology* traces the experience of the relation as it becomes internalised as self-relation and the various historical shapes of reason that this takes. For Tubbs, the *Phenomenology* commends the modern mind to learn how its own political shape of master and slave determines death as other and what this means for its life with the other.

The result of the struggle with death saw the immediate positing of what was previously an only unknown shape of otherness. Self-certainty, in its experience of absolute negation, finds that its truth as being-for-self is a dependent one. It now sees the gap between itself and the external world that immediate desiring did not understand. But the goal of freedom remains being-for-self. Self-consciousness is the master who can be for himself because he has posited the negative of life or being-for-another, as other. What we now see is that this other is judged by the life which is master over death, judged either to be inanimate object, animal or man; the latter left either indifferently as a thing or posited as slave. This makes the other always 'of the most intense political self-interest' (Tubbs, 2008: 27) for it is always defined within a shape of master and slave. Self-conscious freedom is a master and slave relation and, as such, is the 'experience of positing' (Tubbs, 2004: 28), what we saw in chapter four to be illusory being, illusory because the slave or negation is the truth of reflective consciousness.

Being-for-self therefore is the master who has 'built his house on sand' (Tubbs, 2008: 27) because a judgement of otherness is always the exporting of his own truth. The folly of all mastery is in determining such a ground which is actually groundless, because only the other constitutes the foundations of mastery. Death 'as other to life, is already present in the affirmations that life makes about itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 27). And so the political experience of master and slave is the experience of contradiction which will eventually return to undermine the master. Servitude turns out to be the truth of being-for-self, no longer an external nothingness but rather the master's own nothingness. It is interesting to note that in this internalised experience of master and slave we reach the definition of the 'person' of private property. This is the being-for-self whose freedom and mastery is in 'ownership'. In this definition of the person we find a most stark contradiction. The law of private property says that all are equal through ownership. It expresses sovereignty over the world of things

which can be owned, interpreted and used for one's own ends. But there are no slaves, for the right to property makes us all free. And yet, as we saw with Rose in chapter three, it implies not only the exclusion of others but presupposes 'thinghood', that which is merely dependent and an object of desire to be consumed and possessed. Even the modern master who knows his own otherness continues to export it in the objects that he owns, objects which carry but mask the otherness of labour, of poor working conditions and the poverty within which he is implicated.

What are the costs to such mastery? With only inanimate objects as absolutely unessential it is objects *per se* which become key to maintaining the idea of freedom which the master holds. The only way masters recognise other masters is through ownership: 'otherness carried in the objects they own' (Tubbs, 2008: 28). This, as Tubbs points out, was Marx's critique of the 'commodification and objectification of social relations' (Tubbs, 2008: 28). Man is defined as free yet in working for a master becomes objectified and therein estranged from the truth of the life which constitutes self-determination. In this way he is alienated from what his own hands produce, his own life as work and from other workers who share in and constitute his humanity. All this master can do is 'relate to objects as if they were the proof of his humanity' (Tubbs, 2008: 28). The illusion here is also in the labour of 'free' men who in reproducing work reproduce it as a form of slavery, their own and that of others. But it once again raises the question of how far such mastery maintains the illusion of independence. In what ways does he remain not implicated in modern forms of slavery? Tubbs addresses this question in a provocative essay called 'Fossil Fuel Culture' where he examines what he calls the 'disfiguration of culture' (Tubbs, 2008: 77) in the modern experience of freedom, disfiguration referring to the 'end' of culture as re-formation.

## Fossil Fuel Culture

Tubbs argues that the burning of fossil fuels in the West reflects and generates an idea of freedom which no longer implicates itself in a dialectic of experience. It is, he writes, the appearance of a liberal democracy which has 'liquidate[ed] opposition by freeing everything (and everyone) from the illusion, now overcome, of the universal' (Tubbs, 2008: 79). There is thus a severing of freedom from its political actuality in a new reality dominated by the image, a 'voyeurism of totality from without, meaning that there is no totality' (Tubbs, 2008: 79). The culture of education carried in the dialectic of freedom, argues Tubbs, is replaced by the representation of freedom as fossil fuel culture. But this in turn is a culture of the representation of freedom which no longer has dialectical experience as self-relation, the internalised anxiety of a separation from the universal which is formative. Instead, it has no experience of separation because it is free from relation to loss, the other and the

universal. It cannot be 'deserted' by it, as he puts it, and so only represents itself in an 'aesthetic of image as reality' (Tubbs, 2008: 80).

Fossil fuel freedom is a freedom which 'knows no negation' (Tubbs, 2008: 80) because we are released from having to properly think and struggle with the nature of our complicity in the realities of political, social and environmental problems. It is thus 'freedom from implication' (Tubbs, 2008: 80) shaped in and by the technological advances of western modernity, in particular, 'the internal combustion engine... and... the burning of fossil fuels' (Tubbs, 2008: 80). The point is that whilst it is culture *per se*, it is one which only represents the immediacy of freedom and so can only reproduce itself as image and reality which is always without the re-forming substance of culture. It is a 'culture without culture' (Tubbs, 2008: 80), he writes. Return here, is one which lacks any awareness of mediation.

Fossil fuel culture insidiously expresses and generates the idea of choice defining the experience of a consumer culture in the West. It represents itself in the turning on of a light or the filling up of a car with petrol for example, because in these acts of freedom we can hide the dependency involved with such consumption. We can hide the costs of such freedom for others because 'the struggle is not mine' (Tubbs, 2008: 81). This is mirrored in other forms of this representation of freedom – 'to travel without the recognition of nature as other; freedom to shop without the recognition of labour and poverty; freedom as the master who needs no slaves and who knows no slaves; freedom to burn fossil fuels without having to recognise either inner anxiety or outer chaos' (Tubbs, 2008: 81).

The critique that Tubbs offers here has resonances with Rose's essay on the fascism of representation in *Mourning Becomes the Law*. Writing about the representation of fascism and the fascism of representation, particularly in the book and the film *Schindler's List*, Rose argues that to construe the Holocaust as beyond representation because it is ineffable, is to avoid implicating ourselves in what is represented, 'to mystify something we dare not understand' (Rose, 1996: 43). But, what if 'we see that it may be all too understandable, all too continuous with what we are – human, all too human' (Rose, 1996: 43).

Without presenting her analysis and argument here, the point that Rose makes about the film is that we are left as voyeurs of fascism in the same way that Tubbs argues fossil fuel culture is the voyeurism of the object as image only. Citing one of the moments in the book and film where Schindler watches, from a distance, the execution of a mother and son in front of a young girl, the book sees Schindler becomes aware of the indecency of his own voyeurism. In the film however, he merely overlooks the scene and 'the audience is thereby spared the encounter with the indecency of

their position' (Rose, 1996: 43). The crisis is mere entertainment. Rose's examination of the representation of fascism reveals the fascism of representation but does not assert its being overcoming. Rather, our experience of the representation of fascism opens up the 'possibility of our acknowledgement of mutual implication in the fascism of our cultural rites and rituals' (Rose, 1996: 31), a philosophical education which does not leave us 'unmanned'.

This provokes, she writes, not the 'sentimental tears, which leave us emotionally and politically intact [but]... The dry eyes of a deep grief, which belongs to the recognition of our ineluctable grounding in the norms of the emotional and political culture represented' (Rose, 1996: 54). This is the deeply raw experience of being exposed to the contradictions, negations and complicities of the modern representation of freedom.

Fossil fuel culture means that negation, loss, the universal and the other - global, religious, environmental - bears no relation to me, because in the end, 'the other is not real' (Tubbs, 2008: 81). And when our vulnerability to what is other impacts nearer to home, for example, when the petrol tanks run dry or when we are the object of terrorist activity, then the West's response is to continue exporting the experience of fear and loss. It 'outsources fear, in security, and death by exporting them as conflict and war to foreign soil. It uses all means to control the supply of fossil fuels in particular and the world market in general. It exports the population that is endemic to its freedom' (Tubbs, 2009: 153).

For Tubbs, this is the non-culture of a master and slave freedom which does not know death, for it is without the political education that death and the other invites. The West is let off the hook at having to learn what being master really means. The political and economic totality of western freedom is unmediated by its negative truth. Its freedom easily veers toward the terroristic because it has no other to mediate its action. We will explore this idea of freedom also in Williams' analysis of Dostoevsky, for he finds Dostoevsky working through the narratives of such models of freedom and the consequences of a selfhood defined without an other. What Tubbs calls here an 'aesthetic of destruction' (Tubbs, 2008: 81), because it is 'its own categorical imperative' (Tubbs, 2008: 81), is in Dostoevsky a diabolical retreat from the actualities of life lived in the other. And diabolical here has something to do with a freedom unable to learn of its relation to history, time, loss and the other.

But, Tubbs also makes the point that there is a fossil fuel critique which is well aware of and troubled by the paradox of a freedom which it knows to be complicit in wider political and environmental problems. Tubbs refers in particular to the intellectual discourses which critique late capitalism and its impact on global economic and political relations. We recognise that we are a part of the horrors

of a white imperialist history and that the mastery of western life continues to be unaccountable for itself in the world. But what we do with this awareness is critical. One of the overriding responses to the paradoxes of a freedom guaranteed in and by the political totality which is critiqued, is the one which asserts that contingency is total and so there is nothing we can do about it. We are powerless.

This resignation however, expresses precisely a culture which is without education because it refuses the experience of paradox as politically formative and significant. The 'paradox of complicity' (Tubbs, 2008: 71) is then easily supplanted by the intellectual endeavour to 'save the world' (Tubbs, 2008: 71) for paradox itself is 'a dead end' (Tubbs, 2008: 71). It has 'nothing to set against itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 86). There is a background criticism at work in Tubbs directed against the critical pedagogies of emancipatory or post-modern models of education and the teacher.<sup>54</sup> To serve an idea of critical education that dismantles the power of the teacher and its social and political presuppositions, either as *praxis* or as difference, is, argues Tubbs, to inevitably experience a dialectic of enlightenment which repeats prevailing reality. The contradictions are not given enough weight in educational theorising, which is strange considering it is the fundamental experience of the teacher. But this reflects, he argues, the 'domination in modernity of instrumental reason, for it is the contradiction that envelops social critique' (Tubbs, 2005: 103), the *aporia* that all theory is in the end abstract and reproductive of political relations. What Tubbs's work argues is that there can be a philosophy of this experience whereby it becomes the substance of modernity's working out of its contradictions.

The theory of education in Hegel argues that philosophical experience unmans the standpoint of a culture of representation which is free from implication and complicity. Fossil fuel freedom can have no relation to the universality of its action because it does not recognise the devastation that lies between its formal freedom and its lack of freedom and so it cannot take responsibility for it. We will see in chapter seven, that in Dostoevsky, a taking responsibility for all is precisely an acknowledgment of the fractured relation between self and other and between universal and particular, and so precisely the awareness that each is implicated in the other.

For Tubbs then, the experience of life and death and master and slave is the fundamental experience of the culture of thought's relation to itself as learning. It means that even when nothing happens 'education happens' (Tubbs, 2008: 88). The illusion of the master in fossil fuel culture will collapse in different ways and so will somehow carry its own possibilities for representing itself to itself as other. But, and this is significant for a philosophical education that is inherently political, this is the

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<sup>54</sup> In *Philosophy of the Teacher* Tubbs explores this in relation to the critical pedagogies of Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren and the post-modern theories of Elizabeth Ellsworth and Stuart Parker.

case only if recollection is the *substance* of its illusory life as subject, for therein is its learning of the contingency that it hides. Tubbs writes that 'doing justice to fossil fuel culture means complicity as education and not...complicity without education' (Tubbs, 2008: 89).

At its extreme, Tubbs calls this lack of mediation in fossil fuel culture, genocide, for 'evil lives in such privation of education' (Tubbs, 2008: 35). This is a powerful and difficult argument to make for the political import of philosophical education. Make the difficulty of negative experience the content of questions asked, decisions made, and freedom will have its other returned. It will know itself and the other differently. Only in the 'culture' of subjective experience is freedom 'compelled to relearn about itself, from itself, in whatever situation it faces' (Tubbs: 2008: 4). It is the education of the master.

From having explored the educative significance of the life and death struggle and its actuality as master and slave, Tubbs now makes a substantial case for a philosophy of the other in Hegel. But before we turn to this it is necessary to remind ourselves just what is being insisted on here, and that is the significance of the experience of the relation, or of positing, in the same way that Tubbs pursued it in the relation of life and death, master and slave. This is because the aporetic experience which the self has in relation to the other is the developing concept of the other. To posit an overcoming of the political nature of the relation is to deny self and other an actuality, and in turn, to suppress the experience of mastery and its complicity in the illusion that it has been reconciled to its other. It is, as we have seen, to suppress the educative substance of illusion.

## Self and Other

Tubbs writes that there is an internal and external education going on in the relation between self and other, a structuring whereby both self and other are, in their own education, the education of the other. But this is not the mutuality that it might first appear to be. Rather the broken middle of the form and content of the relation will shape the way that the relation is experienced, seen and understood. To see how this works we have to return to the self that constituted our beginning and that is the immediately determined self-consciousness which has exported death and the other to externality. This is the self who is at first not yet aware that loss is present and carried in it as its own self relation. It is 'without the danger of what is other' (Tubbs, 2008: 29). But, we know that this external other is what constitutes its identity as a self. Tubbs reminds us that in this inevitable dialectic of experience 'the self has laid the ground externally for an education about himself internally' (Tubbs, 2008: 29). He is arguing that learning is already the work of the relation which seeks to know itself.

This work is a 'self-determining opposition (Tubbs, 2008: 31) which sees the return of negation to the self which continually rids itself of negation. It is the revolutionary element of freedom's experience as learning because it issues a fundamental change in the status and experience of the relation. The *Aufhebung* is not merely a circular movement of negation and return to the same. Negation and return are the re-formation of the self and its concept of the other, because it is 'an experience in which what returns to itself is changed in doing so' (Tubbs, 2008: 29).

This is why Tubbs' reading of the *Aufhebung* underpins the whole of his concept of education in Hegel. There is no standpoint, no 'excess' even, which does not find itself positing and presupposing and thus being implicated in mastery. But in the experience of this *aporia* lies the 'justice' of education. It is this concept of justice that, we might say, he works to retrieve in Hegel and in Rose as a notion of learning, where justice is subjective substance or divine education, experienced in the learning of death in life, the slave in master and the other in the self.

And so a selfhood and a culture of the self which suppresses the significance of loss and the other, is a self and a culture which will inevitably have this exporting of vulnerability return. The other will be an education of and for the self, for where else can it begin to know the sort of exposure to loss and uncertainty which is its life, except where that vulnerability resides. The other will give back what has been lost. But what sort of education will this look like?

We have seen that there are two immediate ways that the self is not other. First, it does not know an inner relation to otherness for its self-certainty is not an 'other to itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 29). Secondly, it is not the external other who is object, slave, animal or person. In this immediacy of the self, the nature of the separation is not yet known. In fact, 'that 'the I is not the other means that the I is only in relation to what it is not' (Tubbs, 2008: 30). But this lack of awareness of relation in the realm of the natural soon brings with it the awareness that its self-definition is only in relation. This means that the self begins to fear what this means for it, for it is suddenly the 'opposite of what it took itself to be' (Tubbs', 2008: 30). This makes it vulnerable and uncertain. But in fear and uncertainty the self begins to discover that it contains what it previously thought outside of itself. It begins to know the other and its own otherness. Fear is the beginning of wisdom and is the first experience of being-for-self, which in recollection made the content of what it is and does. In this learning however, it cannot help but suffer for what it is losing. To carry self-relation is to know the pain of self-doubt and to somehow hold on to the struggle they embody. For Tubbs, it is only learning which is able to witness to its own struggle and suffering and find meaning.



What is distinctive about the way that the *Aufhebung* is being grasped here is that the external other returns the loss it carries to the self who is now other to itself. The vulnerability that this yields is the dissolution of its unity as a being-for-self for its truth has been ruptured and changed by experience of the other. Now otherness is both internal and external. But it is more than this. All otherness encapsulates vulnerability for 'the truth of loss that now pervades the self has an objective existence outside of himself' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). Yet again, the relation commends its experience as dialectical and thus as learning. The self sees its own otherness in the other which stands before it. The instability of self-certainty is now a constant threat posed by the fact of the other. But the relation is learning about itself in so far that 'self and other are related to each other again' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). The insistence is that there is no reuniting of self and other because the other always presupposes this lack of unity.

What the educational experience of Hegelian philosophy discovers, is that the truth of self and other is 'the same truth, but... only in and as the education of the self' (Tubbs', 2008: 31). It is therefore important to recognise that in this learning the master does not become the slave and the slave does not overcome the master. The truth of self and other exists 'only in this education because in education, and indeed, as education, the ambiguity of this relation is its own truth' (Tubbs, 2008 31). On this reading, the master shares with the slave its being nothing whilst the slave, as nothing, is the truth of the master. But only the education is in and for itself the truth of them both because only education holds 'the ambiguity of this relation... [as] its own truth' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). The negation of the master and the negating and negation that is the slave constitute 'the self formative circle of the same returning to itself and making a difference in doing so' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). We find that 'the truth of the self who is not other is now the truth of the self who is not self' (Tubbs, 2008: 30).

The implications of this working through of what same and difference mean is that there is no equality to be found or asserted without the experience of contradiction, in the same way that there can be no pure realm of difference. Education still leaves us with masters and slave, with social relations of self and other unable to be overcome without the reproduction of new forms of the relation. This poses the question that we have asked before. Is education a good enough justice? What is the point of such a philosophical theory of education if it does not offer a programme for political change?

One of the response Tubbs might give is that the question has not understood learning properly. This is because learning, as it is expounded by Tubbs, is where the question also finds itself not overcome, not discarded, but painfully learning that there is truth to be found in the contradiction that self-relation is always 'a self-determining opposition' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). The justice yielded in

and by this re-forming opposition is that learning now 'appears as both subject and substance' (Tubbs, 2008: 31) to itself so that the opposition between self and other returns to be the learning individual who 'has its own end in its own loss and its own loss as its own end' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). But we must remember that this individual does not yet understand that the returning negativity is already its own which it has exported. But it is the beginning of a philosophy of the other, for the truth of self-consciousness is now 'the education carried in the triadic phenomenology of its aporetic 'identity' (Tubbs, 2008: 31) which is actual, as recollection.

All this leads Tubbs to a particularly difficult formulation of the actuality of this historical learning in and as the modern relation of self and other. It is that 'I am already other and the other is not me' (Tubbs, 2008: 31). The first part of the phrase shows that the I which is already other is the 'culture' of the self who knows the contradiction of being both self and other to itself. The second part of the phrase makes two substantial points concerning the presence of the other in its absence and its absence in its presence. The first is that 'the other *is not me*' (Tubbs, 2008: 32 author's emphasis). This expresses the actuality of the other who is not me. The second is that 'the other *is not-me*' (Tubbs, 2008: 32), where it *is* me as already self-relation. The truth of the statement is in recollection, for the truth of the self who is the other as not self, is that the self is what it is not when it is learning.

Self and other are able to share the same negative truth. And the implications of this are that the self as master can only know the other or the slave, when he comes to know the slave within himself. The lesson offered by the negative is always 'too late' for the master who exports his negativity, but in its return the master is re-formed. As a re-formed self, the master now comprehends the actuality of relation to the other. Therein the misrecognition of the relation is of educative import because 'the lack of unity in the relation of loss to itself is the actuality of the other to the modern bourgeois self' (Tubbs, 2008: 32).

But this means that loss does not return to the self in a pure form because its experience is now one of mediation by the self who knows loss and vulnerability to be a part of itself. It means that to know loss is already for it to be actual as self-relation and therein to be the external other of modern social relations. The other is always an implicated self-relation. What is more, when the self learns of the significance of loss it is learning of its actual life in the other. This is why the actuality of the other has to be thought and not made absolutely other if the misrecognition of otherness and of life and death are to have any 'formative social, political and philosophical import' (Tubbs, 2008: 32). The concept of education in Hegel is far from being of no social and political significance. Its absolute

significance lies in the work of negation, in the uncertainties, failures and risks of freedom as learning.

As a philosophical education then, the I, in and as recollection, knows the actuality of death in life. But we saw that the I, as modern abstract consciousness, wears a veil hiding the truth of death from itself and others. The illusion is so great that he does not see the veil covering his own face or the face of the other. Only when the veil is made visible is it revealed to the master as his own. He is vulnerable here because death is revealed in life for all who wear the veil because there are no longer invisible ones. As we have already seen, 'the veiled face-to-face reveals the truth in a way that the face-to-face never can' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). The modern master then, has already set in motion his own education, wherein 'only in exposing and wearing my veil am I really face-to-face' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). This is a powerful critique of modern bourgeois freedom. And we might even add that the veil which hides and reveals the truth of freedom, is perhaps the invisible mask carried by the impatience with, or criticism of, the notion of education as an end in itself.

But there is also a suspicion here from Tubbs towards the sort of education that this can become for the bourgeois master, who may well 'weep[] for the suffering of others' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). The master's tears are significant because they tell us something about learning and recollection as substantial. In a similar vein to Rose's argument about the sentimentality of an external and predatory relation to the events of the film *Schindler's List*, the tears of a modern culture which eschews its own fascism of representation are, for Tubbs, the sentimental tears of the voyeur. The crisis of complicity is left horribly unreformed. The death which lives in recollection, even though recollection is life as not death, manifests different tears. Even though the freedom won in the struggle is in not dying, death is still 'the truth of...survival' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). For Tubbs, this means that philosophical learning has to be sad.

## Sadness

One of the most fundamental experiences of philosophical education occurs in the 'the sadness of facing death' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). When death is close, for example at a funeral, Tubbs argues that life meets its teacher in sadness. In fact, he writes that at a funeral, 'we are mostly death... not I at a deep level of prescience' (Tubbs, 2008: 3). The negative can meet the negative as sadness and it is substantial because it is the life which carries a sense of 'absolute vulnerability' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). To experience the closeness of death is to recognise that somehow death is with us in a way ordinarily hidden. It is why 'the sadness of funerals can be enjoyed as life-affirming' (Tubbs, 2008: 34).

Philosophical sadness often begins when we speak the 'deepest questions about who we are and why we are here' (Tubbs, 2008: 33). Philosophical experience carries death and loss as its teacher for it 'is the I that is not 'I', but knows it formatively, as an education' (Tubbs, 2008: 34). It is part of the truth of education in Hegel when it is a spiritual learning of the truth of the broken middle. What for Tubbs is the deeply spiritual presence of death in sadness is also the work of death as education and it lives its own truth as 'living death' (Tubbs, 2008: 34). It is why he can argue that 'the whole [of this education] is the way that death, or nothing, or the negative in life, is known by itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 9).

Politically, this leads him to ask what justice is possible to the other in the recognition that the other is the truth of my life as the life of death. The question also requires that power 'be read into the relation of self and other, not out of it' (Tubbs, 2008: 34). To think power is to be power, to be already its shape as a relation to death. Only the exercise of power can undermine itself and so learn the actuality of its life. Justice has to be sad. This is not to be 'advocating inequality' (Tubbs, 2008: 34), but rather retrieving the 'actuality of inequality... as a structural feature' (Tubbs, 2008: 34) of the political self and other. The other is already the failure of the relation to be one of equality. The political question that education asks instead, is how we do justice to the actual self and other? This is the difference that Tubbs' reading of Hegel makes. If education does not ask this question then we do not do justice to the difficulty and the truth of the other. As the self recollects its 'not-I' (Tubbs, 2008: 34) and also the other as 'not this I' (Tubbs, 2008: 35) it shares with the other, or the master shares with the slave, their negative life and recollection becomes the knowing that 'it sustains this education' (Tubbs, 2008: 35). But it must not 'be abstracted into a middle ground' (Tubbs, 2008: 35) which somehow reconciles self and other into a mutual relation of learning. This is because learning 'is' only as the struggle between them which is unequal. *Education in Hegel* is a powerful argument for a reformed understanding of equality and justice.

## World Spirit

The whole of the experience of learning in Hegelian philosophy, as read by Tubbs, is also world spirit, one of most controversial parts of Hegelian philosophy, for read without education it is the imperialism of western reason. Tubbs describes world spirit in Hegel as the 'actuality of the relation of self and other on the world stage' (Tubbs, 2008: 35). We have seen above how this looks when fossil fuel freedom fails to carry its other within itself. But Tubbs argues that this lack of mediation is also expressed and compounded in our 'exporting [of] fear and vulnerability in the form of conflict and instability to ensure that they are not ours' (Tubbs, 2008: 36) such that the other is never a self-

relation that can be thought. The other is in the end 'collateral damage' because 'beyond comprehension' (Tubbs, 2008: 36).

This gives Tubbs the weight by which to argue against the anti-Hegelian brand of a certain post-modern ethics of the other. 'Who is it easier to bomb?' (Tubbs, 2008: 36) he asks, the unknowable and absolute other 'who is undecidable or otherwise-than-being, yet to come' (Tubbs, 2008: 36) or 'the other that i find in myself as the truth of my own vulnerability' (Tubbs, 2008: 36). He argues that the pure other of difference is an imperialist assertion because it has refused its own ground in otherness. Only when the master begins to accept his vulnerability as learning, will he question not only the dropping of bombs but all of the ways in which sovereignty refuses being implicated in otherness. This is to argue against an aesthetics of the other that leaves the other unknowable. This would include the otherness exported in the cheap commodities of a global consumer culture which return 'without implication for our vulnerability' (Tubbs, 2008: 36).

Spirit in Hegel is the return which re-forms the master and slave relation as the learning individual, but it is world spirit when the concept of the other in modernity, in the relations of the west and non-west, is a learning humanity. World spirit thinks its political and technological freedom philosophically. And this means again that 'the actuality of this education will be sadness' (Tubbs, 2008: 37). But sadness cannot be understood simply in terms that it is the emotive expression of the recognition that the other suffers for my sake. This would be to misunderstand the education carried in sadness as political education. Its truth lies in our being changed by the experience.

But how do we live this truth of the relation between self and other, 'whether between and within persons, cultures, communities, or the nations which constitutes the political totality of the earth?' (Tubbs, 2008: 37). The greater the retreat from negation, fear and loss, the less able we are to experience the risk and the truth of the relation which is education. Only where education is its own 'subjectivity and substance' (Tubbs, 2008: 37) can the universal and particular have their truth in the other. A philosophy of education in Hegel 'reclaims all the imperial terms again: 'our', 'we', 'West', 'logos', 'I', 'reason', 'us', 'society', 'spirit', absolute', 'property', 'person', etc in order to be able to speak of otherness with the ambivalence of the complicity of the mastery that it demands' (Tubbs, 2008: 38).

## Conclusion

In *Philosophy's Higher Education*, Tubbs quotes Anthony Giddens remarks about *Hegel Contra Sociology* that, 'this is probably the sort of book whose significance will take some while to sink in...' (Giddens cited in Tubbs, 2004: xiii). Tubbs follows it with, 'it is beginning...' (Tubbs, 2004: xiii).

Perhaps we can now say that this beginning, in Tubbs, is the truth of recollection in which Rose's work is known as spiritual education. The power of Tubbs' argument lies in its relentless commitment to the integrity of learning, a process formed and re-formed in and by the difficulty of the actuality of life and death, master and slave, self and other, and as we will see in the last chapter, teacher and student. But in the background of his work there lies not only the sadness that comes with such integrity but also anger at the disservice done to education by philosophy, religion, politics and educational theorising. His work commends that we once again learn to be vulnerable and reticent in the experience of power and its difficulty so that we can open ourselves to learning about truth in and as learning.

## The Hegelianism of Williams

### Introduction

We have now reached the point in the thesis where the work of Williams can be examined in relation to Rose's reading of Hegel. In what follows, I want to describe the kind of Hegelian philosophical experience that underpins much of his thinking. I will explore this as it has been worked through in his three main Hegel essays,<sup>55</sup> showing how this Hegelianism has found a home in a theory of negotiation and self-dispossession and the implications of this for his thinking of politics, metaphysics, God and education. I will also address the question of mutual recognition in his work because, as each chapter has indicated, mutual recognition is one of the key points of contention for the thesis concerning the extent to which the *aporetic* is seen as substantial education.

### Dialectic

It is a misunderstanding, argues Williams, to read phenomenology in Hegel as an account of how consciousness overcomes the errors of natural thinking, as though consciousness can be left with 'no outside' (Williams, 2007: 60). We instead have to entertain the notion that we have not yet understood what it means to think. Williams admits that his earlier treatment of Hegel offered a somewhat summary analysis of his 'system' as the 'organising principle' which gathers all oppositions under the cloak of its 'universal dialectic' (Williams, 2006: 161). He read it to be an 'evasion of the temporal' (Williams, 2006: 161) and of the contingencies and unresolved tensions of human experience. But this is a far cry from the Hegelian turn he makes with Rose's reading of Hegel in particular, where he begins to re-think the negative as the very 'energy' by which truth is known and experienced. Moreover, to think the very nature of thinking is 'the clue to what can be said and known about God' (Williams, 2007: xiv). I will attempt to tease out the theological implications of this towards the end of the chapter.

The first thing we can say about his reading of Hegel, post-Rose, is that he is not conversing with the Hegel of a totalitarian system of thought or the Hegel of a pure logic, pure in the sense that absolute

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<sup>55</sup> 'Hegel and the Gods of postmodernity' (1992), 'Logic and Spirit' (1998), 'Between politics and metaphysics: reflections in the wake of Gillian Rose' (1991). These three essays have been brought together in *Wrestling with Angels, Conversations in Modern Theology*.

knowing can journey to think itself without the illusions and the contingencies of subjectivity. This would be to veer towards a right wing reading of Hegel's system. But Williams cannot be seen to fall on either side of the conventional divide between left and right Hegelianism. This is due in large part to Rose for he is drawn instead to the fundamental experience of the pathway of doubt, understood as the unyielding revel enacting the formative relation of consciousness to itself within the actuality of social and political relations. In fact, it is the experience of doubt and difficulty as formative that he retrieves and finds meaning for in his contemporary social and political interventions. As chapter one showed, this is part of the educational dimension of his thinking which my thesis argues converges with the educational philosophy of Tubbs.

Williams begins with the question of the beginning. In the same way that Rose and Tubbs retrieve the significance of speculative experience of the conditions of possibility of the object, Williams too argues that to think about thinking unsettles what thinking presupposes - that there is a distinction between thought and its object. This is the illusion of a reflective subjectivity which sets itself up with a self-knowledge constituted by its being 'over and against the object thought' (Williams, 2007: 61). We saw this to be the nature of a positing and presupposing reflection. What phenomenological consciousness discovers is that there is no 'reality stable and self-contained' (Williams, 2007: 37) for thinking upon which it can exercise itself. For Tubbs, the truth of this experience is the beginning of philosophical education. For Rose, it is the revel and repose of the broken middle. For Williams, as this chapter will show, it is the experience of negotiation and self-dispossession which has something to do with the educative life of God.

The philosophical negation of the beginning in which thought loses itself to uncertainty is 'where Hegel's logic takes off' (Williams, 2007: 35) says Williams. Thinking discovers that it can only think relation. It cannot think pure identity or think itself as a pure being-for-self without contradiction. Thinking is 'contemporary with our being around in the first place' (Williams, 2007: 35) and so it already mediates our thinking of thinking. When we think ourselves then we do so in and as thought's 'concrete, time-taking actuality' (Williams, 2007: 35). It is not possible to 'take up a 'thinking' stance towards something called The World, analysing it into primitive components like essence and predicates' (Williams, 2007: 35) without masking where truth resides – in and as the relation between them. Williams, like Tubbs, is working through 'the logic of self-relation' (Tubbs, 1997: 1) which he reads to be the 'unsought and uncontrolled middle' (Williams, 2007: 62) of our thinking, the middle which implicates us in and by what is other.

Williams knows that finite perception does not see that its determinations are what they are by way of 'exclusions or negations' (Williams, 2007: 35). It does not know that it is already 'a moment in a



complex movement' (Williams, 2007: 37) of understanding. But the movement inherent in contradiction and negation presses thinking towards a re-knowing of itself and its object time and again, for relation carries truth as the settled and unsettling nature of dialectical experience. It is the ambiguity of truth which is important in this experience because ambiguity is thinking's re-forming of itself so that negation returns to 'outlive' what it 'defeats'. And reason does this to itself 'by the penetration of its own logic and process' (Williams, 2007: 37). Indeed, for Williams, the logic of thought's re-formation is the very nature of reality, of 'what is', as thinkable. But if reality is the logic of self-relation then it follows that truth itself is aporetic logic. The significance of this is that when logic makes its experience of the object its own content, truth is 'comprehensive intelligibility' (Williams, 2007: 38), a thinking which knows itself within 'infinite relatedness' (Williams, 2007: 38). This obviously raises certain implications for how we know God because it means that to think God is also 'to participate in God' (Williams, 2008: 38). We will return to explore what this might mean for Williams a little later in the chapter.

The logic of self-relation also has social and political significance for Williams. The contingency which is discovered by phenomenological consciousness about its object, mirrors another contingency, that between the individual subjectivity and the social world. Again, there is a sense that Rose's Hegelianism is in the background here, for it is Rose who retrieves the political implications of Hegel's logic for a thinking of the absolute. Thinking about thinking is historical, social and political actuality. Any investigation into its determinations is at the same time a discovery of the social relations which determine its own conditions of possibility. The attraction for anyone with the reforming instincts of Williams is that this speculative awareness of the actual is what enables us to intervene in and potentially transform concrete political relations. For Williams, as well as for Rose and Tubbs, this is ambiguous terrain for it means working philosophically to comprehend social, political, historical and religious experience from within and not outside of the difficulties of those relations.

The extent to which transformation is 'overcoming' for Williams however, is a point of contention in his work overall. There is a less ambiguous language of transformation at times than we find in Rose and Tubbs. This is seen clearly when he writes that, on the one hand, there can be no 'theoretical reconciliation' (Williams, 2007: 60) in phenomenological experience, no social ideal that can be achieved, whilst on the other, arguing that transforming action is the removal of relations of illusion. For the most part, I suggest that when Williams writes in this way about the political implications of negative and speculative experience, he means that in it, we become educated enough to know illusion in all of its most powerful forms. But there are occasions when the tension gets closer to

being resolved by a certain philosophical practice. I suggest that this indicates the difficulty of thinking the educative possibilities and implications of speculative experience through to its logical truth. But it is also my argument that these points of tension with Rose and Tubbs require to be read sometimes pedagogically, sometimes as a 'lack of courage' to make the speculative move as expounded by Rose's Hegelianism and sometimes, as a way to carry the substance of speculative thinking in and for a religious faith.

But what Williams' reading does illustrate is that speculative experience reveals the 'unfinishedness' of our knowing and our language. Natural consciousness is the experience by which we 'move constantly and afresh into the properly speculative mode' (Williams, 2007: 61). We do not overcome the illusions of the natural, but experience its 'undoing' so that we come to know it differently. That philosophical thinking is re-cognition, underpins much of his interventions. He makes the philosophical experience of illusion the content of an education about who and what we are. Thinking is in a constant tension to its own natural perspective. Natural and abstract philosophical consciousness will always seek to reconcile itself to the world as it is, to a reality it takes to be true. But to know the object is also to know its 'unsustainable character' (Williams, 2007: 61). Consciousness cannot avoid the experience of this unsettling. But if we are to understand the nature of the tensions embodied in our beginning with the object then we must risk understanding that failure, loss and uncertainty are part of what we do and who we are as thinking subjects. The experience of the negative, not its overcoming, is as we have seen, the education of consciousness.

To move into the properly speculative mode of thought we must risk 'unmaking' the illusions of the natural, in the sense of coming to know the shapes that illusion takes. But the failures of such an endeavour commend the risk to keep thinking. They invite communicative activity. This is why Williams' interest in language is so central to his understanding of this experience. Language is the means by which it speaks, where we go on being recognised and understood as more than the assertions of private interest or will which only reflect the specific natural contexts within which such assertions are made. Speculative thinking thinks its own actual shapes including what inevitably and unavoidably goes wrong with them. Without this we are left impotent to effect real change in the world because we only end up repeating and re-enforcing natural and unthought political relations. Philosophy in Hegel, he says, is a learning of what 'concretely is' (Williams, 2007: 38) and for Williams, as for Tubbs, this does not mean a chronological process of education, as though knowledge were a series of 'changing particulars' (Williams, 2007: 39), but the intelligible and historical world as the 'time of thinking' (Williams, 2007: 35), phenomenological time that is.

But we cannot divorce this reading from that of Rose, because what her reading allows Williams to grapple with is the nature and significance of the negative as the *aporia* of thought's thinking itself and thus the *aporia* inherent in any attempt to change the world. Adorno wrote that 'to think is to identify' (Adorno, 2007: 5) and that thinking expresses the political totality of the Enlightenment which is always illusion. This is why dialectics, as the 'consistent sense of nonidentity' (Adorno, 2007: 5) cannot be totalised into a 'system' of thought because 'the whole is the false' (Adorno, 1978: 50). The only 'hope' that a negative dialectics offers against totality is that abstract thought can at least continue to 'examine itself' (Adorno, 1997: xiv emphasis removed). But where does that leave our attempts to know the truth of social and political relations and therein our attempt and transforming them?

Rose's 'boldest' (Williams, 2007: 61) insight into the speculative, says Williams, is that even philosophical consciousness carries misrecognition in relation to what it thinks. This is because 'every moment of recognition is also a new moment of salutary error' (Williams, 2007: 61). For Adorno, this negativity must refuse its being colonised by identity. The point for Rose however, is that the truth of the totality of the conditions of possibility of the object can be known but only in and as the 'systematic' exposition of truth, for it 'is not the theory that the mind can possess at one moment, but the entirety of the path, the project, of critical dissolution of the positional and partial definition' (Williams, 2007: 61). This is why Williams argues that a social and political critique has to be also a thinking of thinking if it is to recognise its own standpoint as a moment in the whole of the life of truth. We saw in chapter five how Tubbs gives this experience in Hegel its full educational significance.

Before we explore the metaphysical implications of all this for Williams, it is necessary to see how this reading of Hegel and Rose shapes a theory of self and other, for like Tubbs, the philosophical experience of *relation* to the object means also a re-formed relation to the other. This becomes a fundamental challenge by Williams to a certain discourse in post-modernity which puts an end to metaphysical assertions of truth and the question of the other posed therein. In an age where metaphysics is dead, to talk about 'the real or actual' (Williams, 2007: 53) is redundant because it seeks transcendental principles and conditions which can only be the claims of a 'totalising vision' (Williams, 2007: 53) or 'presence'. And this goes against the only thing we can say about what it means to be human, that it is 'constructed and enacted in speech' (Williams, 2007: 53). Language ultimately has 'no matter but itself' (Williams, 2007: 53) and therefore no privileging tendencies. The only 'other' that it is possible to speak of is the pure other of 'difference' which must not be implicated in or subsumed by the colonising work of reason to determine it.

For Williams, this obviously has incredibly far reaching implications, not least, because such a view of language marks the death of God and the erasure of the transcendental and tends toward an aesthetic of language experience and the other which avoids the historical and political nature of language and otherness as bearers of meaning. With Williams therefore, we have to ask where we go from here, faced by the secular impasse of the relativism of post-foundational philosophy, and its implications for a thinking of the absolute.

The problem that Williams has with all this is that these 'assertions' fail to read the real or the actual 'as difficult' (Williams, 2007: 53) and so they miss the metaphysical dimension of all thinking and speaking. To read actuality as difficult is to enter upon a process of 'internal critique' (Williams, 2007: 54) which discovers that thinking and language are always already implicated in and by the social, political and historical other. This is why the post-modern fascination with difference misses how otherness is actually constructed. The absolutely other makes otherness 'unthinkable' instead of an 'occasion for a developing and often deeply ironic self-articulation' (Williams, 2007:55), what he calls an 'occasion of work' (Williams, 2007: 55). It is the social and political implications of this notion of work that are fleshed out by Williams in a theory of negotiation and self-dispossession.

## Negotiation

Williams, like Tubbs, argues that the dialectic in Hegel does not 'privilege a return to the same' (Williams, 2007: 55). To discover what it means to think is to discover that dialectic is 'the laborious process of evolving a practice in which my desire, my project, redefines or rethinks itself in symbiosis with others' (Williams, 2007: 55). If the thinkable reality (including the paradoxical claim for an 'unthinkable' other) is already the dialectical positings of reflective consciousness then there is no otherness not already shaped in and by the actuality of that relation. The other is always and already changed by its being thought and not thought. In fact, to say that we cannot think the other is to say that we are 'incapable of thinking ourselves' (Williams, 2007: 36) says Williams, which leaves us dangerously subject to the assertions of desire and will alone. We saw this in Tubbs to be the culture of a fossil fuel freedom that without the other – environmental, global, political - could not see how it is implicated in otherness.

This is one of the reasons why Williams is not prepared to cede language to the post-foundational view. Language always delivers more than itself. This is to recognise the significance of what Rose calls the 'inevitable subjectivity of our positings' (Rose, 1996: 6) which constitute the experience of language and its constructing of meaning. There is no space between words and objects where meaning constructs itself outside of the structures and relations which prejudice it; the place of an

'ironic' post-modern theorising which enjoys the 'sheer promiscuity of all intellectual endeavours' (Rose, 1996: 6). Meaning is created only where there is presence, privilege and limit because only then can the shapes of the relation between words and the world be read as reforming what we can say and what we know about its truth.

This is why Rose argues that a post-modern irony is not ironic at all, reproducing in its claim for contingency versus objectivity, the very dualism it seeks to unsettle. Only Hegelian phenomenology practices the 'irony of irony' (Rose, 1996: 6) she says, in its expounding of the drama of recognition and misrecognition. It is an irony 'doubled...by virtue of the expounded and implicated rationality of its expositions' (Rose, 1996: 6). Phenomenological irony knows the 'intersubjective' (Rose, 1996: 7) (an interesting term in Rose considering her argument about the failure of mutual recognition in Hegel<sup>56</sup>) nature of the changing conceptual landscape such that there can be 'no concepts of justice and the Good' (Rose, 1996: 7) that are not implicated in the changing configurations of justice and the Good. But the use of the term 'intersubjective' which seems to suggest a mutually subjective process of concept formation is undermined by the irony of irony because intersubjective experience is itself known ironically.

If thinking presupposes self-relation for Williams then, articulated as the actuality of the master and slave relation by Tubbs, then all intellectual endeavours require the actuality of their thinking to be acknowledged otherwise they rule out the possibility of knowing the political and complicit nature of their own standpoint, their own mastery. Thinking is always 'framed' by the 'already' of actuality. This makes it difficult, because we recognise that thinking, acting and speech have to do with 'how what is said is appropriated, how it sustains intelligibility in the exchanges and negotiations that constitute our actuality' (Williams, 2007: 54). It must also be said, that silence too is significant in the experience of language. Silence is framed by its interruption in speech because how it is shaped and generated does not just cancel language but tells us that there is something we have not captured. Silence is not a timeless 'excess' or 'space' of difference, but relation to that which silences it. To abstract thinking and language from its concrete life so as to avoid privileging the standpoint of reason, abstracts the other from its 'determination within constraints of how my and our life is to be shaped' (Williams, 2007: 54). This is a dangerous political assertion because by making the other unthinkable the other becomes 'something like sacred terror' (Williams, 2007: 55).

Thus, when we engage with a world of others, writes Williams, we do so with those whose histories, perceptions, judgements and conceptual landscapes in some way differ from our own. It is 'impossible for me to have as a matter of my thought and speech only what I generate for myself'

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<sup>56</sup> See *Mourning Becomes the Law* pp74-75

(Williams, 2007: 54) because the content of engaging is already 'these other perspectives and histories' (Williams, 2007: 54). It transpires therefore that if we are to keep communicating, to be recognised and understood in what he calls the 'exchanges' of human interaction, then the identity that we hold of ourselves as well as of the other is the 'labour' of this environment. This is why negotiation is the '*exercise of a historical freedom*' (Williams, 2007: 54 author's emphasis), one which is impossible if the other is absolute difference instead of engaged with as 'enacting concrete intentions within a limited cultural and institutional space' (Williams, 2007: 59).

In post-foundational discourses difference is the 'co-existence of (at best) mutually tangential projects' (Williams, 2007: 54). But negotiation reveals thinking and language to be already social and historical, to be conflict, negation, vulnerability and otherness. But, more than this, negotiation reveals the 'bonds that language requires and presupposes' (Williams, 2007: 56). This, in turn, has to do with 'how' we sustain intelligibility in relation to the other as more than immediate assertion. Williams argues that because language presupposes reflective consciousness, language is also the 'work' which is at the heart of what we can say about being human. This enables him to make a metaphysical assertion in response to the claims of post-modernity. The 'character of reality as known' (Williams, 2007: 58) and therefore of the other, is the difficulty of actuality not only because it engages with the other in risky ways but because there is an overall reality within which difficulty exists as work. This is why he argues that we must not abstract what is produced in human interaction and exchange from the conditions of the possibility of its being actual. If we do this then difference ceases to be fundamentally risky for the producer in communicating or difficult for the interpreter. In fact, it does away with the difficulty of relation as meaningful, since the difference 'is not in any hermeneutical territory common to the two' (Williams, 2007: 59).

Put simply, a post-modern account of the other is a dangerously anti-political stance because in it we are alienated from the actuality of work which is the negation proper to a 'metaphysics of presence' (Williams, 2007: 59). This is also the argument that Tubbs gives in order to rescue Hegel from the charge of being a dogmatic philosopher. Truth in Hegel is the work of the negative which always undermines itself but learns about itself in doing so.

The problem with such post-modern accounts, says Williams, and we have also seen this in Tubbs, is that by abstracting intelligibility and the other from its involvement in the actualities of power, it hides the presuppositions it makes behind the space of pure difference. Difference is then taken to be unproblematic as though there are 'no pressing or significant negotiation[s] over ownership and distribution' (Williams, 2007: 55). This only expresses the formal law of universal private property, that which posits a notion of '*unconditioned access to goods*' (Williams, 2007: 55). Yet to the extent

that private property relations generate and express a system of rivalry in which desire 'can be and is frustrated by the access of others to goods' (Williams, 2007: 55), there are issues of power at work here that already condition such a discourse. Difference presupposes 'the tensions and *aporiai* of power' (Williams, 2007:55). But therein lies the 'work' of negotiation, of self-determination.

## Self-dispossession

Williams' theory of negotiation is also a theory of self-dispossession for the reflective subject is natural consciousness which loses its truth as a self, in relation. Reflection inevitably 'dispossesses' itself of what it thought it was. Williams argues that because of the prior actuality of the natural relation, the illusory nature of its self-positioning in the world is something that reflective consciousness somehow 'senses'. But, at the same time it also seeks the comfort of what Hegel called an 'unthinking inertia' (Hegel, 1977: 51) for this is what reflective consciousness cannot help but do as it positions itself in its material and conceptual environment. Self-positioning is thus the inevitability of negative experience. But consciousness, 'if it does not run away from the contradictions and difficulties' (Williams, 2007: 68) that will come its way in attempts to overcome or suppress them, *learns* that it cannot think reality 'in terms of individuals 'owning' selves, ideas, property in a fixed and uncontended way' (Williams, 2007: 68).

Negotiation becomes the experience not only of a frustrated desire, but the experience of being 'significantly dispossessed of the control of a 'private' will' (Williams, 2007: 57), the 'myth of the self as owner of its perceptions and positions' (Williams, 2007: 70) in some fixed and uncontended way as though relation bears no relation. What's more, he argues, it enables us to recognise those relations which 'intensify untruthful consciousness' (Williams, 2007: 60). These are all the ways in which truth appears certain and fixed, the merely descriptive or ahistorical accounts of reality. Speculative thinking lays bare for us the political actualities of power and of recognition as always 'a story of power and its distribution' (Williams, 2007: 68) so that consciousness comes to realise that there is no 'final resolution of how [it or] we define and speak of our interest' (Williams, 2007: 70). Thinking leads itself, through the phenomenological tracing of its historical determinations, to this awareness of its truth in negation.

In the end the question of difference for Williams is a metaphysical one because the question of the other asks that we think the negotiated life, the 'more' than what is 'just a casual state of affairs' (Williams, 2007: 56). Negotiation and self-dispossession, as the very sinews of self-aware thinking and engagement, commends the metaphysical relation to know itself in and as the experiences of a 'seeing' which takes shape and reforms itself in language and human exchange. This means asking

the question of how it is that speech and action is capable of being 'criticised and defended, understood or misunderstood' (Williams, 2007: 57). At this point I want to make a brief detour to explore whether this theory of negotiation and self-dispossession in Williams is a theory of mutual recognition, keeping in mind the reading of mutual recognition in Hegel and in Tubbs that we have looked at in the previous chapters.

## Mutual Recognition

Williams, post-Rose, carries the weight of Hegelian negative and speculative experience. We might say that, like Tubbs, his analysis of modern freedom as negotiation and self-dispossession seeks to uncover what Tubbs terms the 'exporting' of the negative as other and the distortions this yields for modernity's understanding of itself and its other. He offers powerful critiques of certain models of the self in modernity throughout his work and the intensely tragic dimensions of modern freedom that they so easily hide. But to what extent Williams holds to the *aporia* of the dualism of self and other is of interest to the thesis as a whole because it is the extent to which he is working with the culture of thought's relation to itself as learning.

There is a general reading of Williams' Hegelianism out there which reads his dialectical thinking as a theory of mutual recognition. Benjamin Myers for example in *Christ the Stranger, The Theology of Rowan Williams*, reads identity and otherness in Williams as a dialectically emerging relation constituted by mutual dependence and mutual mediation. He reads Williams' anti post-modern stance as argument for the mutuality of the 'giving and receiving of the self' (Myers, 2012: 55) in mediation, despite the shadow of experience preventing any final overcoming of relation, hence its tragic nature. For Myers, Williams' 'tarrying with the negative' is the work of the shared life of community, of mutually learning subjectivities, a mutual education between self and other because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.

The presence of mutuality in his theological Hegelianism is a particularly frequent observation made by Myers. He writes that the other, for Williams, is 'an opportunity for mutual discovery, adjustment and growth' (Myers, 2012: 55) so that where barriers are erected to mutual recognition 'we obscure the gospel's promise of a new catholic humanity' (Myers, 2012: 55). Dialectics on this reading is seen to be the movement of the persons of human community towards God and each other, even though there is no teleological hope of a resolution of dialectical experience in social and political life. The truth of the negative life is redemption, to be found where vulnerability to loss is most stark. It might be a little strong to suggest that such readings are wrong. But I do think that they offer a simplistic view of Williams' Hegel and his Rose for they do not give due weight to the subtleties of Williams'



articulation of negative experience and his struggle with the aporetic significance this holds for philosophy. Perhaps it is the case that Williams is too often read deterministically, or rather, read without awareness of how the struggle to articulate the actualities of recognition and illusion is itself the educative substance of his work. See the contradictions and tensions in his writing and the integrity of their being present but worked through, and we come much closer to a representation of the difficulty being expressed.

But there is also a notion of mutual recognition in Williams. It is sometimes the experience of self-dispossession as a 'never-ending 'adjustment' in search of the situation where there is mutual recognition' (Williams 2007: 70) or the 'project [which] redefines or rethinks itself in symbiosis with others' (Williams, 2007: 55), that which overcomes the experience of frustrated desire, of master and slave relations in a realm of scarcity. But in the context of his notion of 'work' as the nature of a thinkable reality, we can also see how transcendence is recognition as re-formation. We come to recognise the difficulty of our involvement with the other in its relation to history, access to goods, and appropriation of power. We learn that no one individual or group can claim 'unlimited access to the use of goods of an environment' (Williams, 2007: 55) in the same way that no individual or group 'can define its good as the possession of such use in exclusion of all others' (Williams, 2007: 55). Without these illusions the interests of individuals and groups becomes an object of thought, 'underwritten by the intelligence of others' (Williams, 2007: 55). In this way it is 'collaborative (at least potentially collaborative)' (Williams, 2007: 59).

Negotiation then is mutual in the sense that it is 'intersubjective' but it is a mutuality of the experience of work and therein a broken middle of human relations. Perhaps the word that is missing here is 'education' seen in the terms of the *Aufhebung* as read by Tubbs. The *Aufhebung* would give Williams the 'culture' of intersubjective actuality as recollection, which whilst it cannot be mutual recognition, can be the education of the individual and the community as spirit. Because there is no explicit theory of master and slave or life and death which would give him the language and experience of the *Aufhebung*, the educative heart of Williams work is sometimes less explicit that it needs to be. Yet, he never quite allows the language of transcendence or mutuality to get away from the social and political relations which determine its experience and its truth as already failure.

When writing about Rose, Williams comes closer to a notion of recognition which is not mutual. Rose identifies a post-modern ethics of the other to be a failure to understand the concrete actuality of recognition. The passage from Rose which Williams quotes is as follows. Represented as absolutely other,

'the 'Other' is equally the distraught subject searching for its substance, its ethical life... New Ethics would transcend the autonomy of the subject by commanding that I substitute myself for 'the Other' (heteronomy) or by commending attention to 'the Other'. Yet it is the inveterate but occluded immanence of one subject to itself and to other subjects that need further exposition. Simply to command me to sacrifice myself, or to commend that I pay attention to others makes me intolerant, naive and miserable... [T]he immanence of the self-relation of 'the Other' to my own self-relation will always be disowned' (Rose, cited in Williams, 2007: 59).

The other, Rose argues, is already 'the failure of mutual recognition on the part of two self-consciousnesses who encounter each other and refuse to recognise the other as an implicated self-relation' (Rose, 1996: 54). It makes us 'equally enraged and invested' (Rose, 1996: 75) she says. But to recognise the philosophical experience of the errors of recognition prevents an ignorant slippage into the fantasies of a post-modern ethics of otherness. The experience of error is the difficulty of actuality. But it is the formative experience of self and other for Williams because 'to recognise misperception is to learn; to learn is to re-imagine or re-conceive the self' (Williams, 2007: 60). There is an added dimension to this argument however. We recognise that 'violence' is an inescapable part of recognition. We 'position' ourselves always already in a stand over and against the other. This yields the meaning of the law, argues Rose.

But this has significant implications for a politics of self and other because it insists that we cannot mend the world 'in any final way' (Williams, 2007: 60). Violence is always presupposed by relation. There can be no unmediated identity, no reconciliation of self and other without contradiction. But Williams draws attention to this political *aporia* in Rose as a question of education. That he should do this is interesting because Rose herself rarely gives explicit reference to philosophical experience in terms of education. For us, this brings his Hegel and his Rose into conversation with Tubbs, for he is asking what is educational about the political *aporia* faced in attempts to change the world.

Rose's discussion of violence in *The Broken Middle*, he writes, argues that the ideal of love is always 'involved in violence' (Williams, 2007: 61) and that to posit love without violence is to posit 'a beginning or an end free from violence' (Williams, 2007: 61). This would be a beginning or an end free from experience, mediation, or of being implicated in the exporting of otherness in externality. This only betrays an extreme 'lack of faith' (Williams, 2007: 61) in the risks of both love and violence. 'There is no democracy in any love relation: only mercy' (Rose, 2011: 60). Love without violence 'condemn[s] the human agent to the alternatives of an agape beyond structures and negotiations or a conflict without containment' (Williams, 2007: 61). Without this awareness we miss the ways in

which both love and violence are involved with law, with the 'falling towards or away from mutual recognition, the triune relationship, the middle, formed or deformed by reciprocal self-relations' (Rose, 1996: 75). Law is always 'agonistic' (Williams, 2007: 61).

This should move us away from illusions of equality or mutual recognition for we are 'always already unequal' (Williams, 2007: 62). As modern subjects we might well posit a conceptual and moral scheme in which all are equal, but we can only experience being a part of unequal relations of power and so of negotiations 'held' in and by the existence of law. It seems then that Williams is trying to hold to this contradictory *motion* of recognition in his work. In fact, the contradiction is the integrity of his philosophical struggle with the question. And perhaps we can read this attempt, together with its failures, to be his own falling towards and away from Rose and the question of mutual recognition. But such a view requires the language of Rose and, in particular, of Tubbs to be read into his work in order to give it educational significance.

In Rose's presentation of the work of various thinkers, writes Williams, it is the question of law that Rose returns us too because law is the 'riskiness of strategy and social form' (Williams, 2007: 62) which somehow carries the 'paradox in intelligible acting' (Williams, 2007: 61); that even as we attempt to reform social relations and establish a new ethical existence, 'we stand over against the ethical as order' (Williams, 2007: 63). But these are the very risks that we must make and suffer if we are to keep acting intelligently. It is to risk knowing protest and political action as carrying failure because it is already put in question, unable 'in advance [to] be specified as successful, well-formed or orderly. It is involved with 'violence'' (Williams, 2007: 63). And so whatever the goal, however well-intentioned, Rose warns us against the temptations of the 'private cultivation of a 'beautiful soul', the revolutionary divorce of means and ends that lures socialist transformations away from their properly political task, and the isolation of a kind of timeless culture of friendship and civility, alien to the labour of public construction' (Williams, 2007: 62). Williams is, through Rose, commending the work of the broken middle of protest as educative, the protest which is always *contra* protest, the change which is *contra* change.

This is the political and philosophical 'risk' of *aporia* which underpins the act of self-dispossession. That I 'give' myself to the negative of myself, to the negotiations and negations of power is to be returned to where power learns of itself, in and as this dispossession. This means that we can no longer 'essentialise' violence by abstracting it from action *per se*, which only serves to make it either 'present or absent in a situation' (Williams, 2007: 64) thus repeating a dualistic and essentialist view. Violence is always a part of social, political and ethical negotiations. The worst kind of power is power which refuses to know how it is involved with violence so that it does not know how it is

involved with the other, how it is implicated in or accountable to the other. A thinking of the ethical must include an account of violence and the complicit nature of its ethical life.

In Hegel, Spirit is the actuality of ethical substance or the spiritual essence of reason made actual as self-consciousness. At first, spirit is the objective reality which knows itself to be the 'abiding essence' (Hegel, 1977: 264) of all, the in-itself from which ethical action proceeds. Spiritual essence is 'resolved' into the individuality of the work of self-consciousness which knows itself to be universal. This is the 'ethical *life* of a nation...the individual that is a world' (Hegel, 1977: 265 author's emphasis). But this ethical life, because it is 'substance and consciousness of the substance' (Hegel, 1977: 266) is spirit divided as substance and consciousness. Self-consciousness is thus the mediating middle of the unity of spirit, in which consciousness acts ethically and so is substance, in as much as substance is actual only as ethical consciousness. It is thus the work of self-consciousness which is actual ethical substance, the 'only way ethical substance is approached and learnt' (Rose, 1996: 116).

But as Rose reminds us, according to Hegel's notion of experience, ethical consciousness achieves the opposite of what it intended. The dialectic of recognition and misrecognition that occurs between two self-consciousnesses is what 'yields the meaning of the law' (Rose, 1996: 75), the culture (*Bildung*) of spirit as the 'triune (triple) relation [of spirit] to its own otherness and to the self-relating of the other' (Rose, 1996: 65). It means that ethical life 'can only be approached phenomenologically as it appears to us, modern legal persons' (Rose, 1996: 75). But it is in this awareness of the failure of ethical life, the middle 'formed or deformed by reciprocal self-relations' (Rose, 1996: 75) that Williams reads as 'a source of power' (Williams, 2007: 63).

The problem which besets us however, is that thinking 'looks for a beginning which is not a risk, a beginning that already controls or contains its goal' (Williams, 2007: 62). So how do we begin? We make the beginning its own question. But we realise in doing so that it is already its own question. This is the significance of the experience of recollection in Tubbs. A speculative beginning 'liberates' the beginning in an 'awareness of and imperative actuality prior to, and powerful in respect of, our specific desire' (Williams, 2007: 63). It is a freedom from ignorance of the actualities of power, rather than freedom from the illusions of power. The difficulty, of course, is that the former acknowledges that it is learning whilst the latter reproduces the ignorance of an unthought beginning. It is this awareness that for Williams brings us up against the fact that we cannot help but fail in respect of our environment and the other. And this can only be an anxious place from which to speak, determine and act in the world precisely because the certainty of the natural order of things must somehow keep going whilst carrying its own negation.

Williams argues that the anxiety of such a beginning is also the 'moral and conceptual source of how we understand what it is to fail' (Williams, 2007: 62). What the beginning risks in putting itself into question is what Rose calls the 'equivocation of the ethical' (Rose, cited in Williams, 2007: 62) in contrast to the ethical as the source of an 'anxious self-perception' (Williams, 2007: 63) paralysed by the fear of failure. Only in the awareness of how we are constrained by our relation to law are we able to continue acting, communicating and of 'setting in being a state of affairs other than the existing uncritical order' (Williams, 2007: 63). This does not abolish the ethical in some 'anti-order of arbitrary free-for-all' (Williams, 2007: 64) but to 'suspend' it. Action as self-dispossession, action which is vulnerable to the contradictions of ethical life is action which continues to negotiate and communicate in the recognition that all action is involved with violence. But this is to make action capable of being criticized. Ethical action is the risk of equivocation and so the education of violence.

Williams views risk as the educative experience of ethical life. Where post-foundational theories fall short in their critiques of the privilege of the author is that they suppress the significance of 'the agon of authorship' (Williams, 2007: 65), most especially their own. They suppress the risky and violent nature of a thinking, which because it speaks itself over and in opposition to its object, sustains its object or its other as that which 'imperiously requires to be understood, to be thought' (Williams, 2007: 65).

The question raised for Williams in all this is the one which the western tradition has always asked: 'what does not just 'happen' to be the case in the world of objects' (Williams, 2007: 56). It returns us to being able to think about the underlying structures or conditions of thought and speech which is open to what he calls the 'non-functional dimension to the political' (Williams, 2007: 57). It is the educated beginning of a 'universality of perspective' (Williams, 2007: 65), a re-cognition of selfhood as more than just local interest. But at the same time it is the return of universality to its being thought, to its being subject. Philosophy returns consciousness to the inescapable difficulties of the relation between the universal and the particular. But this, as Williams remarks, has always structured the 'discourse of metaphysics and politics' (Williams, 2007: 65). This is why he argues for a re-conceiving of metaphysics in and for a modernity 'aware of [its]...own processes' (Williams, 2007: 65) and so of the *aporia* of thinking universality in and as contingency. Only the aporetic logic of thought thinking itself can ask what is 'not negotiable in our environment' (Williams, 2007: 66 author's emphasis).

## Metaphysics

We have seen that these arguments raise the question of how we 'see'. We are therefore led to ask 'how error arises' (Williams, 2007: 57) in our seeing. Language is about freedom and the shape of its object which it is always seeking to understand. But because relation to the object is presupposed by reflective consciousness, we cannot give a truthful account of the world as it appears without that description being incomplete or failing to be what it is. Language is the grammar of a freedom which is always saying more in the actuality of its errors and thus is self-dispossession. Language with integrity is language which puts itself and its object into question for the sake of the truth of the relation. Philosophical experience of error has to confront this incompleteness. This has something to do with metaphysics because the metaphysical relation has always 'worked with a pattern of self-displacement' (Williams, 2007: 71). Our language about God and about truth is also that which must put itself into question.

Metaphysics for Williams is thus an occasion of work whereby presence and totalising vision are reconceived in the experience of the other. Error is the 'fundamental category' (Williams, 2007: 71) at work to think substance in-itself. But this presses us towards thinking how substance becomes the error which re-forms itself as substance in and as the metaphysical relation. It is a re-formed and re-forming metaphysics which comes to know that historically, error is the story of the absolute's self-loss and self-recovery' (Williams, 2007: 71) told in and as the life of 'temporal contingency' (Williams, 2007: 71). The absolute is not a 'matter of misperception' (Williams, 2007: 71) alone, but has something to do with this non-negotiable element 'in being a thinking subject' (Williams, 2007: 71). Reflective consciousness is 'a learning of some sort of dispossession' (Williams, 2007: 70) so that 'the constant is this: that truth requires loss' (Williams, 2007: 70). How we come to think within this structure of dispossession as learning is, for Williams, the whole of Hegelian logic. The reason that Hegel's reading of history is interesting is because a historically thinkable reality underlies the intelligibility of the choices that we make and the negotiations we engage in. We are already the formative life of truth losing itself and learning about itself. This gives Williams a way to think God within political and historical contingencies. It opens up truth, substance and the transcendental again but this time within the speculative experience of their being thought.

## God

Hegel's philosophy is not just politically and philosophically significant but inescapably a theological enterprise as well, one which has not perhaps been given its due weight as far as Williams is concerned. In what follows we will see how he attempts to understand what Hegel's logic might be for our thinking and knowing of God. But I realise that I have to stray into the territory of theology a

little here and so I hope the reader will forgive the theological tricks that I might make. But even in this territory it is the philosophical implications of his thinking that I am drawing attention too.

As we have already seen at the beginning of this chapter, to think the nature of thinking in Hegel is to discover that there is no pure unmediated identity. The nature of a thinkable reality is such that all identity is 'relatedness' (Williams, 2007: 36). And thinking which is dialectical means that it will negate what appears because 'everything is what it is because of what it is not' (Williams, 2007: 37). In this way thinking is self-emptying or to use the theological term, thinking is *kenosis*.

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel shows how the dialectic is understood theologically. Dialectic, writes Williams, is what is meant by God's power, the movement which mediates the immediate concepts of theology (*Verstand*), such as the 'goodness of God' or the harmony of God and man. Dialectic means that 'Gods goodness has to give away to Gods power' (Williams, 2007:37). This is God's self-relation (as transcendence and immanence?). When this negative notion of God presses religious thinking towards what philosophically speaking is the speculative relation of identity and dialectic, it 'ends' in the mystical realm which is seen as a 'concrete unity...of what *Verstand* alone can only think fragmentarily or episodically' (Williams, 2007: 38).

The implications of this for religion are that its speech about God can be read dialectically. In the lectures Hegel shows that divine predicates 'fall short of actually bringing God into speech' (Williams, 2007: 38). If they describe what God is, they make God a determinate object like others in the world, the object of a fixed finite perception which God is not. If they describe the action of God then 'they still only describe properties and not 'God as God'' (Williams, 2007: 38). We have seen in chapter one, a similar reading of the divine predicates in Hegel by Rose. What the *Logic* tells us is that to think God is 'necessarily to think the form of the dialectic' (Williams, 2007: 40). In this way, logic is the way that the beginning that thought makes in its knowing of God is now known differently, or rather, to use the more Hegelian term, recollected as a moment in the life of God. God's totality of self-relation is the dialectic thinking itself within and as this whole. And for Williams this means that in Hegel we have a 'metaphysic' that carries and thinks its own mediation as truth. Williams reads the philosophical 'third partner' into the metaphysical relation here because a 'dialectic which thinks itself consistently' (Williams, 2007: 66) is the re-formation of contradiction in a 'continually self-adjusting, self-criticising' (Williams, 2007: 66) practice. The third partner becomes the *experience of learning* about itself.

The speculative stage of thought knows that its own logical processes are the truth of a thinkable reality. But Williams argues that this makes it *reconciled* to reality. He is careful to say that this is not a 'fusion of subject and object' (Williams, 2007: 38) for presumably this would reproduce an 'unthought' dualism, an unthought reconciliation. But the language still betrays the difficulty that he has here with thinking God as mediated and thus as always a broken middle between absolute otherness and man. We will see below how he fleshes this truth of the self-relation of God out in the terms of the Trinity as read by Hegel, but first of all we need to see how he addresses what happens in logic to the traditional grammar of God.

The first thing he says is that the divine predicates of the Christian tradition do not become mere 'window-dressing' (Williams, 2007: 38) concealing an underlying absolute of pure logic. We cannot dispense with history's speech about God; the God of Augustine or Aquinas for example, even if such speech, as Tubbs argues, posits thought as error in relation to the in-itself. This is because it is precisely this thinking in Hegel which 'shapes the actual structure of thinking about thinking' (Williams, 2007: 38). It is the experience of error and the recognition of error that teaches logic what thinking *actually* is, which is to think 'ultimate simplicity, indivisibility and self-relation' (Williams, 2007: 38).

But we are still left with the question of what this means for the nature of a God who is both One and self-relation. If logic is thinking as a reconciled totality then does this mean that God is pure mediation? Have we finally dispensed with the notion of a transcendent other? For Williams, Hegel's logic it seems allows social and political contingencies to be 'held' by a thinking which is absolute. But we see also that Williams reads immediacy and mediation as the 'self-sufficient, self-related, independent or absolute' (Williams, 2007: 39) God. To call this, as he does, a speculative 'reconciliation' seems to undermine the difficulty of the actuality of God as known. Words which express unity and wholeness are used by Williams every now and again to describe this speculative 'moment' in which the whole knows itself, words such as 'perfect' (Williams, 2007: 40), or, that which is 'fully understood' (Williams, 2007: 40). It would seem that thought it still the error. And yet at the same time Williams' work to think this through does not quite let him make the leap in either direction – to God as the experience of thought only or to God as a transcendent otherness without contingency.

The problem comes down to the question of what difference the speculative in Hegel makes to our knowing of God. For Rose and for Tubbs, the broken middle of self-relation means that even our experience and our re-cognition of the relation repeats another misrecognition. We cannot kick the ladder of experience away which means that there can be no unity, no truth as a reconciled totality



without it being experienced as a broken totality. In Rose and Tubbs, truth is this 'drama' or the divine comedy of the relation between God and man, two halves of a freedom to which neither add up.

Of course, Williams' interpretation of Hegel is not so simple a notion of reconciliation. The Trinity is crucial to his understanding of God whose self-relation is 'too radical to be expressed by any formulation that rests content with some version of 'God *and* the world' (Williams, 2007: 39) whether it is the world that determines God or God who defeats or overcomes the world' (Williams, 2007: 39). Williams is attempting to bring mediation, rather than a frozen dialectic, to its speculative truth. God as a pure dialectic is a God who loses not only real otherness and therefore importantly, real negation, but a God reduced to mind and will alone making the world 'an unmediated identity' (Williams, 2007: 40). This would in turn mean that God could not be thought, could not be subject and so 'not in the strictest sense thinkable' (Williams, 2007: 41).

But it seems that when the going gets tough for Williams, the tough still seeks a '[ ] clarity' (Williams, 2007: 40), a 'resolution' (Williams, 2007: 41), a way not to speak the 'nonsense' (Williams, 2007: 41) of unmediated identity. The *aporia* is a problem for Williams in one sense because it leaves us with a dualism. As far as my thesis is concerned this is problematic because Rose's insight into the speculative and Tubbs' insight into the educational significance of *aporia*, makes the idea of resolution a reproduction of *aporia* but one which is hidden by abstract philosophical consciousness. This is indicated by Williams when he writes that the doctrine of the Trinity 'resolves our *aporia* in thinking God' (Williams, 2007: 41). It is seen to be somehow overcome in the philosophical recognition of the relation in its triune structure. But this is in tension with his reading of truth in Hegel which is the revel and repose of recollecting truth in contrast to a revel which can think itself reconciled. What Rose invites us to do is to know *aporia*, in 'attention' and 'eros' as the very work of truth to know truth in and as *aporia*.

The observation I make here is a little unfair however. In his reading of Hegel, Williams is trying to make the speculative leap that Hegel requires in the *Logic*, to re-think God in terms of his triune being. And what this struggle shows is precisely the contradictions as not being resolved or 'fully understood'. Reading him aporetically, witnesses to the contradictions as substantial in and for themselves. This means that it is not possible to find an answer in Williams as to what he believes is the nature of God. Rather, we are witness to his struggle to understand. We can see how this plays itself out in his reading of the Trinity.

We have to begin with Christianity in Hegel for through the incarnation and resurrection it is the absolute religion. It is the religion which is 'transparent to itself, thinks itself – spells out the inseparability of thinking God and thinking the reconciled consciousness' (Williams, 2007: 41). For Tubbs, this inseparability is the history of a relation to truth in which thought reproduces itself as error in relation to the in-itself. Christianity is thus the 'historically determined faith' (Williams, 2007: 41), the *time*, says Williams, that it takes to learn about God. But the thought of God is dialectical and in this way thinking has self-dispossession as its own content which means having to think about God in Trinitarian terms if we are to understand God in the person of Jesus.

We know already from our discussion that we cannot think God as an unmediated identity; 'spirit beyond time, God before creation' (Williams, 2007: 42). The Trinity however allows us to think an 'eternal, irreducible being-in-the-other' (Williams, 2007: 42) because God is a self who is his 'own absolute other' (Williams, 2007: 42). This is 'Spirit, as a living consciousness proceeding into the determinate otherness of the world' (Williams, 2007: 42). Williams goes on to give an account of the Holy Spirit as eternal love, arguing that this is an underestimated elaboration of God in Hegel. While I do not want to explore this here, I would say that Williams reads thinking to be 'radical loving: ecstasy, being-outside-ourselves' (Williams, 2007: 42), a love which makes a distinction of otherness which is just as much a *sublated* distinction. Hegel gives us, suggests Williams, an idea of eternal love as a sort of mutual recognition, that in God become man there is 'nothing of the source that is not real and actual in the utterance or positing of the issue, and nothing of that issue that is not the life of the source lived in reflection or response' (Williams, 2007: 43), Spirit is the continuation of this divine life lived as 'infinite otherness and reconciliation' (Williams, 2007: 43). It is the third partner constituting the relation between consciousness and God which is the relation of Father and Son as concrete historical life.

But it is not clear to what extent Williams reads this mutuality in the life of reflective consciousness. The relation between God and thought in Hegel is aporetic logic and so the divine life enacted in and as the broken middle between the absolute otherness of God and man's reconciliation with God as spirit. Spirit is the thinking which in thinking itself as logic, recognises that its truth is aporetic. Speculative consciousness might be seen by Williams to be the reconcilable totality but to think this unity is for it to fail, a reproduction of the experience of the unhappy consciousness.

But, Williams goes on to say that spirit, in and as the life of 'subject in community' (Williams, 2007: 43) is the consciousness which discovers *actual* 'reconciliation and freedom' (Williams, 2007: 43) in the illusions of abstract thinking because 'concrete freedom is the development of self in the otherness of what is given' (Williams, 2007: 44). This can only have something to do with the actual

life of spirit being one of learning. Trinitarian doctrine on this reading is a radical politics. But he recognises that the history of the church, which posited the inner life of freedom in opposition to the political life of the state, has rendered to God what is God's and to Caesar, what is Caesar's, such that there has been no hope of 'reconciliation with the political' (Williams, 2007: 44). The language once again here is of an 'overcoming' of the tension, and whilst I suggest that Williams has 'learning' in mind when he uses such terms, it is also indicative of a failure to make the speculative move to a notion of education as the truth of the relation, not reconciliation.

This reading of the Trinity can be put into the philosophical language of immediacy, mediation and the speculative. God is immediate being-for-self and being-for-another in the person of Jesus. Spirit is this actuality of the 'I' that is 'We' and the 'We' that is 'I' for them both. This is the 'perfection' of God. But this leads us to ask why God has to be perfect? Why is the experience of the actuality of the absolute not what the absolute is, in and for itself as learning?

These are the questions that must be asked of Williams' reading of Hegel because, in fact, he is raising them himself in his work through the implicit and sometimes explicit way that he works with the concept of education. The language of learning pervades his philosophical thinking, often at times where the points of tension strain to understand themselves. If learning has something to do with what can be said and known about God, which it does for Williams, then as he writes, 'how we learn about learning' (Williams, 2007: 74) becomes the condition for an 'ontology, a politics and a metaphysics' (Williams, 2007: 74) alike. It seems that in one sense learning does have the 'last' word in Williams's Hegelianism but always already as a new question.

For Williams, Hegel helps us to deepen our understanding of God as not a separate entity from humanity. In the *Logic* thought is able to 'lay hold of its own nature...[to] think its own dispossession' (Williams, 2007: 45) which is to think its history as negative. By doing so, as phenomenology and logic, thought comes to know what it actually is as substance which is subject in the person of Jesus. But to think history like this is not to achieve a pure plateau of speculative reconciliation. This is his argument against a kicking of the phenomenological ladder away. In fact this would be misreading of the speculative. He wants to hold on to the political and historical contingencies and paradoxes of speculative thought because only in these experiences is God's self-dispossession and self-recovery possible for us.

In the end, he writes, if we ask whether there would 'be a God if there were not a world?' (Williams, 2007: 47) Hegel 'simply refuses us the vocabulary and conceptuality to put such a question intelligibly' (Williams, 2007: 47). Perhaps we can say that this is Williams' faith in the truth of the

speculative and in his own work to understand. It is a faith which does justice to his Hegelianism. Our thinking of God always unsettles itself. In fact, because thought 'can't think [itself] forwards' (Williams, 2007: 48), it cannot be a 'leading [of] history by the nose' (Williams, 2007: 47) and at the same time make us free. Hegel's thought and Rose's retrieval of speculative experience, 'leaves us stranded in history' (Williams, 2007: 65), the only place, he says, that we can be. It is a return to metaphysics because the whole of the thinkable reality insists that we speak of metaphysics in terms of loss. This is the self-emptying of God into the contingencies of actual existence. In this way, we might suggest for Williams, God can be seen as 'something like *work*' (Williams, 2007: 72) where social, political and historical contingencies are not overcome but seek for some sort of 'convergence always 'real' and always elusive' (Williams, 2007: 72).

Is this then 'a negative metaphysic, comparable to a negative theology?' (Williams, 2007: 68) he asks. In one sense yes, if, we might argue, substance is subject. This is an ontology of sorts because we are faced with the experience of substance as both 'authentic difference' (Williams, 2007: 71) and as mediation. But this is how Hegel understands God in history, albeit from at times a historically simple and suspect reading of Judaism as the 'Other that Christianity overturns' (Williams, 2007: 71). For both Judaism and Christianity, God 'is' in relation to the divine life of otherness, the human community embodying 'the disinterestedness of the divine' (Williams, 2007: 72) in and as its own interest, its own meaningful life in relation to God.

But the paradoxes and also inherent dangers of any community claiming to stand for the 'interest of a God without interest' (Williams, 2007: 72) has been and remains the '*political* vocation' (Williams, 2007: 72) of the human community which realises the 'dispossession of its own self-definition' (Williams, 2007: 72) or interest in order to carry the universal and eternal life of God in history. On this reading, the absolute realises itself in the historical life of thinking and reflective beings, of human agents in the world of creation. It is the 'transformation of the contingent' (Williams, 2007: 72) but not the overcoming of contingency, presumably because it does not 'lose the paradox' (Williams, 2007: 72) in the work of negation to learn of its own truth.

## Conclusion

For Williams, God is 'real', not as an ideal, but rather as the work of the 'timelessly actual' (Williams, 2007: 73). What this means is that thinking about thinking in Hegel returns metaphysics to the difficulties of thinking actuality. Is this for Williams to argue something along the lines of a modern metaphysics similar to that of Tubbs? A modern metaphysics wherein reason is able to discover its own negative adventures to be the education of the absolute? If the answer to this veers towards a

yes, then it is a re-formed metaphysics that we find being tentatively thought through in Williams' reading of Hegel, one which has an idea of learning as central to the difficult relation between politics and metaphysics. If this is the case, then we might suggest that for Williams, God is the divine life which '*labour[s]* at its own substance' (Williams, 2007: 73 author's emphasis) and which in doing so, learns that it is learning.

## Williams and Dostoevsky: Language, faith and Fiction

### Introduction

One of the appeals for Williams of a writer like Dostoevsky is that the depths of human experience are imagined and thought through, sometimes 'shockingly' (Williams, 2008: 1) so, without apology for the difficulties that this will present us as 'inhabitants of his novels' (Williams, 2008: 1). A whole host of themes; freedom, truth, self and other, faith, dialogue, recognition and redemption, are tussled with not only in story, but in and as the very processes by which language works and invites us to engage imaginatively with them.

Dostoevsky is a writer who, for Williams, lets the 'questions' themselves be their own education in the processes of language and representation. He does not allow for any resolutions or for the overcoming of contradictory experiences, neither do we find any neat reconciliations between language and its object, between man and man or even between God and man. Rather, the *experience* of contradiction, difficulty, loss and failure is allowed to be its own movement in the novels, a way to imagine the actuality of truth and life in God and in the other. Writing is therefore a question of faith for Dostoevsky but an extremely difficult one for it is the process of writing itself which insists that we think 'what else might be possible if we – characters and readers - saw the world in another light, the light provided by faith' (Williams, 2008: 1).

In what follows I will draw attention to the key themes in Williams' examination of Dostoevsky as presented in *Dostoevsky, Language, Faith and Fiction*. These will be, respectively, truth, freedom, the Devil, dialogue and recognition, the soul and the 'iconic'. I will do this in the light of the Hegelianism that we explored in the previous chapter because it is my argument that Williams' reading of Hegel and Rose informs his view of the nature of language, experience, truth and freedom in Dostoevsky. Out of this philosophical background he carries the implicitly educational reading of the novels in a most profound way.

It is also my argument that Williams articulates his theories of 'negotiation' and 'self-dispossession' in his analysis, seeing their experience to be not only part of the 'logic' of the novels, their 'inner movement and coherence' (Williams, 2008: 5) but also the marks of a faith, specifically a Christian

faith, alive to its life in God. I will also draw attention to what I argue is a theory of philosophical learning in Williams couched in the terms of 'iconic' experience.

## Language, Faith and Fiction

Dostoevsky's fiction lays bare for us the painful question of 'what human beings owe to each other' (Williams, 2008: 1) in a world or a culture so deeply scarred by its struggle with freedom, authority and power; religious or otherwise. There is no place for us to stand as readers which does not find itself implicated somehow in the narratives, questions and events which deal with this question. But through the remarkable abilities of Dostoevsky as a writer to do this, Williams writes that we are asked whether we can imagine 'living in the consciousness of a solidity or depth in each other which no amount of failure, suffering, or desolation could eradicate' (Williams, 2008: 1). This is the question that the negative in Hegel raises for us. What truth does it carry in and for lived experience? Is there meaning and truth to be found that is capable of being spoken that does justice to its difficulties?

For Tubbs, and for the thesis, this truth is education. For Williams, it has to do with the nature of language experience because language is about freedom and time and difficulty and so always that which presses us to the 'more' of what is said. Language is always involved with freedom's education about what is. It embodies in mind, as well as in its sheer physicality, the labour of making sense. Dostoevsky, for Williams, is a writer who finds truth in the depths of that which can be spoken and lived negatively. It is in these depths that we are somehow closer to a sort of truthfulness about who we are whilst at the same time being 'plunged into confusion' (Williams, 1994: 120). Negation and return are dialectically formative relations.

The novels have often been read as expression of a sort of 'anguished agnosticism' (Williams, 2008: 2), says Williams, because the question of faith imagined in relation to the 'extremes of failure, suffering and desolation' (Williams, 2008: 1) is the 'unresolved tension' (Williams, 2008: 1) that Dostoevsky leaves us with. But Dostoevsky presents faith or indeed 'the lack of it' (Williams, 2008: 4) rather as a 'picture' of the life of human freedom in its relation to truth. It is far from an agnostic wrangling, rather an intense furrowing of the difficulties of what faith is and means that Williams sees in the novels. And if truth, in its Hegelian sense for Williams, is not what can be possessed in one moment, definition or description, then Dostoevsky's picture of faith is precisely truth in its temporal necessity and experience.

One of the ways this is seen to occur is in the nature of Dostoevsky's writing itself. Referring to Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the polyphonic nature of the writing, Williams writes that we see in the

novels 'the coexistence of profoundly diverse voices' (Williams, 2008: 3) which as a 'whole' express the unfinishedness of language. Williams gives particular attention to this unfinishedness because he sees in language the difficulty of the actuality of speech and thus its deeply speculative possibilities. For Dostoevsky, language 'is the indisputable mark of freedom' (Williams, 2008: 11). We thus have texts that '*consciously* write[] out the to and fro of dialogue' (Williams, 2008: 3 author's emphasis). Williams not only finds the experience of language, in its negations, returns and ambiguities, structuring the narratives and events of the novels, but therein the way that language gives birth to narratives of loss and learning. And where language is distorted narrative, we find the diabolical. For Williams to read Dostoevsky in this way is for him to find and read the contradictions and unresolved tensions of the narratives as markers of truth. If we remember that his reading of Hegel and Rose emphasises the philosophical experience of error, failure and loss as experiences of truth, then we can see that it is also their formative nature that he sees to be the substance of the struggle between language and faith in Dostoevsky.

He finds in the novels a certain logic of the negative at work. Because of this he wants to argue that fiction for Dostoevsky is 'closer to the truth God intends than any kind of factual reporting' (Williams, 2008: 63). The brilliance of the writing lies in its ability to express this truth as the struggle, pain and irresolvable tensions of modern freedom. Difficulty is lived and worked out on the written page, making sense only in its actual evolution in the novels. This is why they write themselves so differently from his notebooks which are 'left behind in the commitment of writing the fiction itself' (Williams, 2008: 47).<sup>57</sup>

Williams traces the consistent experience of loss in Dostoevsky, seeing as he does in it the author's witness to the negative as a 'kind of theology' (Williams, 2008: 5), a way of articulating the divine in human life and in the losses carried in and by the writing itself. There is a profound 'interdependence between human freedom and human language and human imagination' (Williams, 2008: 5), one which resists the philosophical and political temptations of a freedom, a culture and even an authorship which might seek to put an end to 'history, imagination, and speech' (Williams, 2008: 14).

## Truth

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<sup>57</sup> Williams shows how this happens by looking back to the evolution of Myshkin's character in *The Idiot*. Williams does not see the contrast between the Myshkin of the notebooks who is a Christlike figure and the Myshkin of the novel as the failure of Christ likeness in the world. Rather, the writing itself changed who and what Myshkin could do and be. For Williams, the gap that emerges between Myshkin and Christ 'is to do with the fact that the Prince makes no adult choices' (Williams, 2008:48) and this has consequences for freedom in the world. The Christ of the Gospels on the other hand is someone who struggles with the making of choices and is therefore someone who has a narrative and a historical life, shaped in and by choices made.



'if someone were to prove to me that Christ was outside the truth, and it was really the case that the truth lay outside Christ, then I should choose to stay with Christ rather than with the truth' (Dostoevsky cited in Williams, 2008: 15).

Williams cites the above, written by Dostoevsky in a letter to a friend on his release from prison in Siberia, to illustrate the difficulties that he was having concerning the question of religious truth in the intellectual drift of the late nineteenth century and its burgeoning political liberalism.

Dostoevsky is a writer in perpetual struggle and conversation with modernity. But the letter is not testimony to an 'irrational and self-tormenting religiosity' (Williams, 2008: 15), the assertion of a voluntarist model of faith based on the insistence of choice as the fundamental category of belief. In fact, such an idea of choice is one of the models of freedom dismantled in the novels. Instead, the letter is testimony to the fact that Dostoevsky was 'slowly evolving a religious idiom and practice... still uncertain of how to relate it to the Orthodox tradition' (Williams, 2008: 17). The struggle of faith, has to do with the question of how it becomes possible to speak about Christ as truth when truth is so fundamentally bound up with the actual life of human freedom? What does Christ look like as truth in contrast to truth known in and by modern consciousness?

One of the ways that Dostoevsky deals with question is in *Notes from the Underground*. The underground man argues that what we are particularly good at as free persons is subverting and sabotaging what is in our best interests, whether someone else has decided what that is, or whether we have determined it for ourselves. Either way, 'part of the distinctively human is the capacity for perversity, addiction, self-sacrifice, self-destruction and a whole range of "rationally" indefensible behaviours' (Williams, 2008: 17). Attempts to shape a rationally functioning society are problematic and contradictory because even with humanity's best interests at heart, order involves some sort of imposition of force so that all too easily 'violence is canonised as the means of social rationalisation' (Williams, 2008:18) for the protection of freedom. There is no neat reconciliation with the world's processes, particularly when those processes are measured and scientifically calculated, and no 'coherent moral policy' (Williams, 2008: 18) to which we can all adhere. The experience of modern freedom is something akin to Hegel's unhappy consciousness. Relation to the external order becomes the internalisation of the master and slave relation in a self-awareness plagued by the sense of 'failure and finitude...guilt and resentment' (Williams, 2008: 19).

Modern reason, 'presented as the triumphant exercise of rationalizing power, power to reshape and reduce human experience' (Williams, 2008: 19) seeks therefore to contain this unhappiness within its own explorative limits. It builds 'stone wall[s]' (Williams, 2008: 18) of truth, walls constructed as 'if that is all there is' (Williams, 2008: 18), as if our desires can be reduced to what can rationally

satisfy them so that we will be reconciled to the world without issue. But the contradictions of this mastery are not far away. By scratching a little deeper beneath the surface in order to know the real truth of things we are faced with the inevitable illusions of such a reality and its failures to sustain itself.

The ensuing paradoxes of an Enlightenment reason which attempts to rid itself of humanity's 'primitive' beliefs and conflicts are, that to impose a rational order it must itself be violent 'for the sake of peace' (Williams, 2008: 19). But also, when it seeks the truth of itself it can only find mediation by the world which belongs to it. Thus the whole of the underground man's ramblings portray a modern self-awareness that is 'deeply miserable and painful' (Williams, 2008: 19) because of the acknowledged failures and irreconcilable oppositions characterising human experience, oppositions which the underground man refuses to reconcile. This is important for our reading of Williams here because he goes on to illustrate how the experience of these contradiction plays itself out in the novels and what this means for the truth of freedom.

But there is a wider question for Dostoevsky running through this struggle to know truth. When the given reality of modern reason is the horror of a humanity suffering and inflicting suffering, then how on earth do we 'live intelligently and without despair in a world that so deeply pulls against our ideals' (Williams, 2008: 21). What sort of reason and truth is possible for a freedom unable to reconcile itself to the world? It is also the question posed by the concept of the broken middle of social and political experience in Rose and Tubbs. We see it articulated most harrowingly in Ivan's description of the abuse and suffering of children in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the implications of this for a life of faith in the story of the Grand Inquisitor. The novels invite us to imagine what sort of freedom makes truth possible within this brokenness.

One of the ways that Williams sees the novels exploring these questions is by setting truth 'mapped out' (Williams, 2008: 20), truth 'as the sum of rationally and evidentially demonstrable propositions' (Williams, 2008: 20) against the truth that Christ makes possible. Christ's truth is different in that it enables a response or an 'agency' within and by which truth is comprehensive in contrast to truth as it is known ordinarily, or 'naturally'. Williams sees a speculative notion of truth here which has something to do with Christ's life and death manifested in the experience of death, loss and vulnerability in human experience. It is the way that Dostoevsky captures this notion of truth that Williams finds interesting, particularly when it yields a more truthful struggle for freedom.

For Dostoevsky and Williams, like Hegel, Rose and Tubbs, truth cannot be abstracted from the way that it is actually experienced in social and political life without doing it a violence. And the dilemma

facing philosophical consociation is that it too can only know truth in and as abstraction. This is why, in Hegel, truth can only be approached phenomenologically, as it appears to us. But phenomenological experience can recollect abstraction so that abstraction knows itself in and as a moment of the whole. Williams shows that truth in Dostoevsky is also being presented as more complicated than we ordinarily take it to be. This makes him part of a literary, poetic, musical and artistic tradition of thought which has the imaginative genius and resources to express truth as more than just appearance. We might call this the imaginative truth of the negative.<sup>58</sup> Dostoevsky is, it could be suggested, writing the *experience* of truth as it is lived, hence the importance of its dialogical forms and the dialectical movement of events and narratives.

So far then, language, faith and fiction in Dostoevsky are the truth that Christ makes possible. It is not something created by the will's choosing but is, because of experiences which allow the world's processes to be seen in a different light, as more than will alone. The response of faith to these experiences is 'an act of *appropriate* freedom' (Williams, 2008: 25), not 'a matter of compulsion' (Williams, 2008: 25) or the right to impose a particular order on humanity. To choose Christ over the truth is to be painfully interrupted and unsettled by experience and so to see the self and its truth put into question at the deepest level. It is a process of learning because it commends the labour of the self to re-conceive itself and the world as more than the I. To choose Christ, we might say, is to choose and trust in the divine truth which is enacted as loss and resurrection, the self-sacrificial life of the negative.

But when we begin to speak about truth as more than what belongs to freedom ordinarily understood, yet enacted only in and by this freedom, then we have entered the discourse of a faith which in its ambiguities and difficulties is also of political significance. It is to Williams' analysis of freedom in the novels that we now turn in order to address the relation between faith and freedom.

## Freedom

In *Devils*, writes Williams, 'we have a diagnosis of the pathology of fantasies of absolute freedom... the dream of a liberty completely without constraint from any other' (Williams, 2008: 11). It is a

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<sup>58</sup> Williams finds this in many of the artists, poets and thinkers that he writes about. In a very brief piece written about the portraits of Rembrandt, he writes that he is able to portray a 'depth of self-awareness' that shows us the 'more' of what appears. These are faces that 'look lived in; not smooth, not finished, simply expressive of time that's passed'. He writes that such a creative act is one of mercy in the sense that this may be how God sees us, 'neither completely good or bad, but simply marked by time, often failure or pain, needing to be contemplated with acceptance'. Williams, R. 2010 'Archbishop's Favourite Portrait' *Country Life Magazine* [online] Available at: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/543/archbishops-favourite-portrait-country-life-magazine>

freedom which becomes the 'foundation for a sort of nationalistic metaphysic' (Williams, 2008: 22) in a 'cell' of revolutionary intellectuals. But, and with the master and slave relation in mind here, without an other, freedom is empty and must destroy whatever brings it into relation with otherness. But this is inevitably a self-destruction, for this idea of freedom is already the *aporetic* identity of its being its own otherness.

For Dostoevsky there are significant dangers inherent in any notion of freedom which takes itself as ultimate reality, not least when a religious commitment takes itself to be a matter of will alone 'to hold to whatever it likes' (Williams, 2008: 22). When such a humanly created God becomes embodied in the shape of a nation, which it does in the revolutionary politics of a certain Russian liberalism in the book, 'a corporate self-will' (Williams, 2008: 25) as is argued by the character Shatov, it risks becoming the most terrible form of repression – 'our' God whose 'purpose we bear' (Williams, 2008: 22). In the end Shatov realises that this makes his Russian God of no substance at all. In fact, in this 'spiritual animal kingdom' substance is only subject and so a nation whose freedom lies in self-will alone is an aesthetic of the universal in whose name anything is justified.

For the character Stavrogin, 'the dark enigmatic character on to whom so many people have been projecting messianic hopes' (Williams, 2008: 21), there is no doubt that it is the power of will which structures all reality. But this view of freedom, disturbingly enacted in his relations or rather lack of relations with others, means that he has no way 'to discriminate between good and evil. It is all the same whether he asserts himself or humiliates himself, whether he preserves life or destroys it' (Williams, 2008: 23). He possesses a mastery not only immune to dependency on any other, but one which leaves him dangerously without the experience of negation or vulnerability as formative. Death, negation and fear can be used by him arbitrarily to secure and maintain his freedom. In the group as a whole, this view of freedom leads to the political 'generalities' of a revolutionary rhetoric which can justify the potential losses of some human lives for the sake of the greater good because there are no 'recognisably human futures' (Williams, 2008: 24) to be thought.

The point Williams goes on to make is that truth or reconciliation with the world occurs not through the action of self-will and so of mastery alone, but rather through the particular experiences which yield a recognition of the world's processes as '*having been made possible* by agency other than will' (Williams, 2008: 25 author's emphasis). In the light of Williams' Hegelianism we can see that agency is made possible by the labour or negotiation of 'making the possibilities actual' (Williams, 2008: 25). Freedom's work here is its learning. The experience of self-dispossession that Williams finds in the novels reveals the presence of what is more than just will arbitrarily asserted. It suggests that this 'presence' is loss but a loss which is learning. Refuse this experience and there is only terror.

This is where truth emerges, in the education that it has about itself. And so faith for Dostoevsky is 'a response which "moves with the grain" of things' (Williams, 2008: 26), a response which makes *choosing* Christ a more truthful 'truth' than truth as merely the assertion of choice. All well and good but, if the claims of faith are more than what a factual world can actually discern, then in what ways do they connect with the lived reality of that world. How, in other words, does Christ 'make a difference' (Williams, 2008: 26) asks Williams, if we are to continue thinking and acting in the world with more than a 'suffering resignation' (Williams, 2008: 26). This is the same question asked of the speculative in Hegel. How is consciousness of the aporetic of political significance? To choose Christ, it seems, is to choose the experience of being unsettled, uncertain and vulnerable. But what difference does this makes in the world?

Responding to such a question, Williams draws our attention to the Grand Inquisitor section of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In these famous passages the Inquisitor says to Jesus, 'there is for man no preoccupation more constant or more nagging than, while in a condition of freedom, quickly to find someone to bow down before' (Dostoevsky, cited in Williams, 2008: 27). The problem with Christ's gift of freedom to humanity is that there are no sets of facts on how to live or exercise freedom. He 'sets before human consciences an impossible ideal' (Williams, 2008: 27). Freedom is too weighty, too costly and too difficult. We would rather have the ease of a freedom which told us how to live, how to choose those 'things' which will tell us what sort of master we really are, than the actuality of knowing that choice means loss and being implicated in the sufferings of others. The gift of freedom in actual fact showed no love for humanity at all, merely respect. Freedom is a form of slavery to difficulty. Only a few 'spiritual athletes' (Williams, 2008: 27) are capable of it. Real love is what the Inquisitor shows in his 'covert despotism' (Williams, 2008: 26) because it removes the difficulty and the confusion that Christ's freedom brings.

Christ in the world of the Inquisitor is truth as an 'unquestionable and unchangeable system' (Williams, 2008: 27) to which people think they are free because their lives are ordered and stable. People only 'want to fantasise that they are free' (Williams, 2008: 28) in a world where they must also be slaves. The illusion of a freedom that does not recognise that it is work, that it is limited, and that it is negative, is always the fantasy of a life free from difficulty. The more the illusion is maintained, particularly we could argue, within the consumer world of the free market with its current rhetoric of choice, the less there are experiences for difficulty to learn its freedom. This is too easily the route to a controlled and managed system deceptively easy and temptingly free from critique.

In the demonic world of the Inquisitor, humanity's story is manipulated into one where freedom, 'for they are given roles to play, songs to sing, even emotions to enjoy' (Williams, 2008:78), is reduced to a childlike innocence in which 'no real choices' (Williams, 2008: 77) are required. The Devil of such a world is a narrative in which there are no risks, no losses, no failures and no negotiations to be had. Yet these are precisely the educative experiences which upset nihilistic responses to loss, 'the seductive lure of negation' (Williams, 2008: 79), because nothingness is "'real" only as the shadow of something solid' (Williams, 2008: 79). To see only nothingness in negation is to know only 'silence and death' (Williams, 2008: 79), to conceal from death its own actuality in the lived particular lives of human beings.

Furthermore, Williams argues that the cultivation of a childlike innocence in the world of the Inquisitor is nothing other than the enemy of freedom and history. Real freedom learns to take responsibility for itself in its negotiations because it has learnt the nature of making choices. Take real choice away, sustain an environment where there are no significant risks to take because they have been made for you already - risks that are 'self-defining' (Williams, 2008: 81) - and there are no ways for freedom to learn what real choice means. It is to take away any notion of a self-determining and meaningful future because the future has already been written by others.

The trajectory Williams has been tracing so far is that 'from the underground man to the Inquisitor, the persistent theme is that truth "outside" of Christ requires lying about the human condition' (Williams, 2008: 30). For the underground man, violence is done to what is fully human about us when truth is presented as an abstract 'order' of things and a prescription for living. For Stavrogin and the others in *Devils*, truth is merely the will shaping its environment which means that truth is in the end only 'material' to be manipulated. For the Inquisitor, truth requires the exclusion of Christ for the illusion of a freedom which is no more than the ability to make choices in a reasonably secure society structured by a 'clear system of rewards and punishments' (Williams, 2008: 30). It might be suggested that the one experience that is being avoided or refused in all of these cases is the formative nature of the experience of the negative and the risks that freedom demands.

Christ is outside the truth then if truth is just 'appearance' or if truth is nothing but the will and thus without history or negation. Christ *is* in the experiences which invite a different response to or recognition of what is true. Christ is known in the 'unexpected', in the refusal of the comforts of order and moral structure. It is symbolised by Christ's kiss of the Inquisitor at the end of the chapter when he is banished, as well as the kiss that Ivan's brother Alyosha gives him. Both kisses represent the fact that the 'scope of what is possible' (Williams, 2008: 32) has been changed. It could be argued that the kiss is recognition that Christ's truth has something to do with learning; that on the

one hand learning is already carried by the actuality of the kiss, but on the other, that the kiss is also what makes it possible. Dostoevsky's Christ is in this experience, 'in or with the *protest* of a desire that is without final historical satisfaction but moves confidently through history as if tracing a fundamental rhythm grounded outside the mechanism of the world's details' (Williams, 2008: 31). Christ here is the invitation to learn.

Christ is discovered therefore, in the risks required by freedom if it is to have meaning and reconciliation with the world's processes. Christ is 'not a fact among other facts' (Williams, 2008: 37). In this way faith in Dostoevsky 'claim[s] a cognitive or objective... character' (Williams, 2008: 38) in the sense that it is seen to be generated by something more than just will alone, more than faith as merely an 'item' (Williams, 2008: 38) in the world like any other. This makes faith a way of 'seeing' the material world differently. Might we call it a speculative 'seeing' within which we achieve a different relation to actuality? Might it be what happens when education happens, when experience of the material world is made the content of a higher education? If so, then we see Williams teasing out the lack of any future reconciliations in Dostoevsky, for if he trusts the freedom of his characters and narratives to go on experiencing and changing; in dialogue; in relation to unintended consequences, then there can be no tidy 'end of time' absolution for the cruelties and horrors that Ivan describes.

Ivan insists that even if we can imagine a future where abusers are forgiven by the abused, the fact that freedom is the *choice* to forgive or not reminds us that 'what has happened simply should not ever have happened' (Williams, 2008:39) and so prevents history's darkest events from ever being acceptable. The world is to be valued 'as a set of particulars' (Williams, 2008: 39) not to be subsumed in some 'imagined whole...[where] they become derealised' (Williams, 2008: 39).

But Williams argues that in Ivan's 'refusal to accept a world in which atrocities happen' (Williams, 2008: 39), the refusal which constitutes his rejection of God and reconciliation, he has rejected the possibility of healing and forgiveness and thus learning. His rejection is a 'denial of any future freedom to alter relations or transform memories' (Williams, 2008: 39). The difficulty of his questions have no way of being carried in and by a dialectic between freedom and God within which freedom and God learn, in and as the other, about the actuality of healing and reconciliation. Ivan's denial is in contrast to what Alyosha finally comes to know as the 'unconsolated pain' (Williams, 2008: 39) of a faith without 'cosmic' reconciliation, but a faith in which 'all he will really know is that change happens and that it is not dependent on human resource' (Williams, 2008: 39).

Williams' teasing out of the profound negative subtleties of the narratives at work in Dostoevsky, the 'necessary nonresolution of statements and behaviours within the interaction of the narrative' (Williams, 2008: 39), is a way for him to show how truth is being constructed and experienced in the life of modern subjects. By exploring the question of Christ against the truth, Williams is beginning to build a case for an idea of God which challenges traditional religious notions of God and truth and freedom. This would sit with his Hegelian reading of the Trinity because in Hegel we cannot abstract the work of God's self-relation from what Williams calls the work of a thinkable reality. And in Dostoevsky, it seems we cannot abstract God as independent truth from how truth is actual in the social and political life of freedom. This tension is, I suggest, something of what Williams finds to be Dostoevsky's God: in and as the very *question* of God.

## The Devil

The role of the Devil in Dostoevsky and of the demonic generally is central to any examination of his fiction, appearing as he does 'in various guises, folkloric, sinister, literary and biblical, in all the major novels' (Williams, 2008: 63). They are at the heart of a storytelling which journeys to know the difference between truth and illusion.

Probably the most significant of the Devil figures in the novels is the Devil of Ivan's nightmare in *Karamazov*. The extraordinary nature of these passages lies in the fact that they 'draw[] on the variety of ways in which the diabolical is imagined in the whole course of the novel' (Williams, 2008: 40), centred here on the conversation between Ivan and the Devil concerning the question, 'does anything come to the mind from beyond itself, or is the appearance of the world a creation of the ego?' (Williams, 2008: 40).

The first thing Ivan and his readers have to face is whether the Devil is real or just a fiction of Ivan's mind. The Devil, however, is not interested in proving his existence because, sharing in the sceptical mind characteristic of modernity, the Devil wants to 'keep the mind in suspense' (Williams, 2008: 41), knowing that objectivity is negated by a mind which takes all reality as 'the effect of his own transcendental I' (Williams, 2008: 41). The Devil argues that he is there to guarantee precisely what is so human about us, the irrational, contradictory and negative element of thought that is so much a part of modern self-aware freedom. But the deception of this argument is one which hides the fact that it really 'confirms the impotence of reason' (Williams, 2008: 41) and therefore, for Ivan, the perpetually tragic nature of a mind which experiences the impossibility of truth or reconciliation with a transitory and negative world. In confirming the unstable and relentlessly dialectical nature of freedom the Devil has his most 'decisive triumph' (Williams, 2008: 41-2) for as Ivan descends into



the madness of self-doubt he can only 'attribute[] to the devil thoughts and utterances that are really his own' (Williams, 2008: 42). He cannot take an adult responsibility, to use a familiar phrase of Williams, for his own freedom.

The Devil also presents his own modern sceptical mind to Ivan as confirmation of the endless dialectical reality of the world's truth. He argues that there is no proof of another world, whether it is God's or Satan's because he knows it could just as much be his own creation. However much he would like to 'join in the chorus of achieved cosmic harmony' (Williams, 2008: 42), he cannot, because that would be the end of time. And as the spirit of perpetual negation, 'his task is to go on making things difficult, sustaining the possibility of error and failure' (Williams, 2008: 42) thereby sustaining what is so fundamental about human freedom and therein its human capacity to 'choose' God. The point Williams is pursuing here is that, on the Devil's premise, we cannot know whether God or the Devil is real 'in-itself' because truth cannot be reduced to a set of facts in this way. The Devil appears to be acting in the interests of truth. This is because he refuses any evidence for God or for himself and he does this in the name of doing what is in the best interests of humanity and for the continuance of history, for history is never a set of 'finished propositions' (Williams, 2008: 43).

This means once again that for both Ivan and the Devil there is no hope for final 'universal hosanna[s]' (Williams, 2008: 43), for the drawing of all humanity's pain into a reconciled life because that would prevent history and freedom continuing. But Williams' insight into the complex nature of this diabolical narrative is that the Devil is not all he seems. As a pure negation, he has no access to the actuality of truth's negativity in and as the 'self-commitment of bodily and temporal life' (Williams, 2008: 43). The experience of truth is its learning and communicating itself in the body as a giver and receiver of meanings; in speech, gesture and in the time of life and death. But the Devil has no physical actuality in which to *risk* negativity in relation to others. Only in and as an embodied freedom which experiences its negations and vulnerabilities, is truth actual. The point of this, for Williams, is that truth 'incarnate' is life as a *learning* of loss and vulnerability and thus the struggle of a truthful self-aware freedom.

This is a reading of the negative in Dostoevsky which is akin to Hegel's notion of experience. I also want to add at this point that, when readings of Hegel kick the ladder of phenomenological experience away in a purely conceptual logic, we might call this also, a diabolical retreat from the aporetic truth of logic in and as a shape of experience. The *Logic* is also a shape and reproduction of master and slave and life and death relations. As it was argued in chapter four, logic in Hegel cannot be separated from the experience of social relations, that it too is a culture. If it is, it refuses its own

education. The diabolical here would be a logic which is only dependent on itself in an illusion of a mastery which is not aware of its political actuality.

Part of what it means to choose Christ over the truth 'is to accept that we shall not arrive within history at a stage where there are no choices and no commitments to be made' (Williams, 2008: 43). To choose Christ is not to choose a triumphant 'end of time' or a timeless ideal of love. It is to be absolutely historical by 'taking the step of loving attention in the mundane requirements of life together' (Williams, 2008: 44). The diabolical is not only that which takes us out of time, but that which refuses or distorts the way that truth is known in and by the struggle for meaning over meaninglessness. But this is also why in Dostoevsky there is 'no form of words about faith that is beyond criticism' (Williams, 2008: 45) even when they are his deepest articulations of faith. There is no standpoint available which cannot be undermined but, for Dostoevsky, it is the most truthful of places to be for those utterances.

This is a similar point to the one Tubbs makes in response to what he sees as a common misreading of Hegel's philosophy. Even when the absolute nature of the system in Hegel is most 'asserted', its experience as phenomenology and as logic, is already the speculative nature of that assertion. And Dostoevsky too, 'can only demonstrate the intensity and integrity of his own formulation by at once himself exposing it to these uncontrolled and potentially destructive reactions' (Williams, 2008: 45). This is his integrity as a writer and as someone struggling with belief because not only is there no end to speech, to what the gaps and fissures in language represent and indicate, but in relation to the language of faith it becomes an intense 'self-interrogation' (Williams, 2008: 45) and thus a continuing language of struggle. This could be called the integrity of faith when it is learning.

Williams calls this educative dimension a 'theology of writing' (Williams, 2008: 46)<sup>59</sup> which 'project[s] something beyond... ending or otherwise signalling a level of incompleteness, even in the most minimal and formal mode, indicating as yet an untold story' (Williams, 2008: 46). Language works to resist its own temptations to reduce truth to the appearance of things. This is why 'faith and fiction are deeply related' (Williams, 2008: 46) because both are '*gratuitous* linguistic practices standing over against a functional scheme of things' (Williams, 2008: 46 author's emphasis). This is why Williams takes such an interest in the way that literature expands the imaginative life, because he sees it capable of enlarging the moral, political and spiritual language and landscape of ordinary human experience.

For Williams, the question of Christ against the truth is closely tied up with the writing of fiction because it belongs to the dimension of the world and of human freedom which is more than simply a descriptive account of the way things are. 'The novel, in its narrative indeterminacy, is a statement of "non-violence", of radical patience with the unplanned and undetermined decisions of agents' (Williams, 2008: 58). But, as we have seen Rose argue, freedom presupposes violence. A speculative account of non-violence would presumably then have to include an account of the violence that it too carries if it is to know how it is determined. We might say that for Williams, it is only literature and the arts that can be this actuality of indeterminacy. The novel itself, certainly in the hands of Dostoevsky, can somehow 'be' or present to us a picture of what truth is because it can show how it is experienced in a way that ordinary speech cannot do. Violence is involved in the writing of fiction then, for language always leans toward conclusions and ends. But, says Williams, when the author knows this violence and yet risks it as the struggle to sustain the trajectory of speech and human narrative, then violence is somehow also non-violence or perhaps we can suggest, it lives its life as learning.

This challenges us not to read the Devil in Ivan's nightmare as a figure of openness. This is because a purely demonic narrative, fictional or otherwise, is only the pure movement of negation and contradiction and violence and lacks the 'image or concrete expectations of the "reconciliation" he [the Devil] dutifully gestures toward' (Williams, 2008: 61). The novel, for Dostoevsky, is witness both to 'the openness of complex and ambivalent action to grace...[as well as] simply to the ambiguity' (Williams, 2008: 61). This is precisely what Dostoevsky would say makes a novel, for it avoids 'ideological manipulation and the sentimental, individualised eschatology of conventional early modern narration' (Williams, 2008: 61).

## Diabolical Narratives

It is to a more in-depth exploration of Williams' reading of the demonic in the novels that we will now turn. *The Brothers Karamazov* contains Dostoevsky's 'most extensive reflection' (Williams, 2008: 63) on the nature of the Devil, exploring as it does the embodiment of various shapes of untruthfulness and self-deceit. The levels of diabolical identities are varied and Williams in the book, explores the different ways in which they operate. From the 'small devil' (Williams, 2008: 65) of Fyodor Karamazov to the more serious demonic narratives of Father Ferapont and Lise Knokhlakova, we witness to the various forms of self-deceit at work which is always 'a sign of something substantially wrong in the teller' (Williams, 2008: 68).

Williams' examination of the diabolical in relation to illusion and self-deceit is interesting for the thesis, because it is the cultural and societal structures and habits which generate increasing levels of self-deceit in the contemporary world that Williams seeks to expose in many of his social and political interventions. The demonic is at work in the self-deceptions which pull against the life of freedom in its ability to be self-aware and capable of learning.

Williams' analysis of the more minor characters in the novel clarifies something of the nature of the demonic that he is leading up to say more about in relation to the Inquisitor narrative. We have already seen how the Devil 'drives history to continue' (Williams, 2008: 72), the necessary irrational force of events, who, despite not knowing 'the secret about the unfolding of events' (Williams, 2008: 52), sustains 'the possibility of telling one's own story and that of others without foreclosing their meaning or distorting the telling in the interests of a false reconciliation' (Williams, 2008: 72). But Williams warns against a reading of the Devil having an integrity here, reminding us that what certain demonic narratives tell us is that the purely negative life of negotiation 'without value and differentiation' (Williams, 2008: 73) is in fact a 'mangled idea of freedom and even of truthfulness' (Williams, 2008: 73).

'If all we have before us is a continuum which includes equally horror and beauty, the horror is worse than it would otherwise be because there is no way of putting it into a context where it can be in any way healed or modified. It just happens' (Williams, 2008: 73).

It brings into focus the question raised by Ivan's Devil as to the nature of a world without God, where 'the ego moves in' (Williams, 2008: 73) as God's replacement. If this means, which surely it does, suggests the Devil, that 'everything is permitted' (Williams, 2008: 73), in the sense that will is the bottom line from which value is then ascribed, then what does this mean for a self with no 'anchorage' (Williams, 2008: 53) in anything other than the assertion of will. In Dostoevsky such a self is alienated from itself because of the inevitable stasis that occurs when 'that self is conscious of its own complicity in a cruelty from which it shrinks' (Williams, 2008: 73). It could be argued that Tubbs' theory of fossil fuel culture is also a theory of the demonic in that it is not a 'culture' (*Bildung*) of alienation, in the sense of re-formation, and thus not an experience of a complicity that might be thought. This is because the will, become mere image and reality, is only a voyeurism of a world in which it is not implicated.

For Williams, as we might argue it is for Tubbs, the demonic is a 'realism without grace' (Williams, 2008: 74), a world in which the self has no background against which it can see itself. But the demonic is ultimately a way of speaking about oneself and the world which will fall apart because it

is not able to 'bear what it sees, within or without' (Williams, 2008: 54). It has no resources to draw on, no language and no value attached to engaging with the world. It has no work of the negative that it can recognise. It could be suggested that its loss is experienced as melancholia. For Freud, the melancholic life is a relation to loss that so impoverishes its ego in an intense disregard of self, that it presses it towards the death of life. It is an 'overcoming of the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life' (Freud, 1957: 246). Mourning, on the other hand, is the *work* of the world which has been lost and thus the work of a negation which returns to be the world. Mourning in Dostoevsky would be that which resists the demonic pull towards death in an imagined future where death is not inevitable and so where resistance to the diabolical is always possible.

The varying narratives of 'diabolical possession' (Williams, 2008: 85) in *Devils*, in the realm of both the personal and political, show us those who are in some way 'inexorably oriented toward death' (Williams, 2008:85) because they live where untruth abounds. We have the leader of the group Pyotr Verkhovensky with his 'skilfully disguised affirmation of the justifiability of immediate and local violence' (Williams, 2008: 88); Shigalyov, who 'represents the conviction that the future is indeed capable of being planned and controlled' (Williams, 2008: 86); controlled that is by a small enlightened elite; and Kirillov, for whom suicide represents 'the supreme and logical climax of human maturation into God-like power' (Williams, 2008: 23).

This is a particularly demonic narrative for Williams, because in Kirillov's 'visionary ecstasy' (Williams, 2008: 90) of a humanity no longer bound to the illusion of a God as the ultimate source of events, people will come to realise 'that there is nothing beyond the mind and will' (Williams, 2008:92). Real freedom, for Kirillov, is freedom from 'nature, history and God' (Williams, 2008: 92) for these are only the self-created fictions of man, at once a necessity and a source of untruthfulness. For Kirillov, the ultimate proof of the power of the will to assert itself lies in 'the capacity to destroy itself [and thus God], the purest possible act of "unreasonable" self-determination' (Williams, 2008: 91). It allows him to argue that all action, whether it be good or bad, is in the end 'good' or equally 'lovable' (Williams, 2008: 90) because people who are 'bad', are so, merely because 'they don't know that they are good' (Dostoevsky cited in Williams, 2008: 90). Action is not seen against a background in which it has significance. It is a freedom which ultimately lacks any content because there is 'nothing that can sustain desire and movement' (Williams, 2008: 93).

Williams' construal of the diabolical in the novels shows that he sees in Dostoevsky, remarkable imaginative resources and skills for a revealing of the illusions and deceptions of modern subjectivity. For Williams, we might suggest that it is a mark of good literature that it can complement a philosophical as well as religious approach to social and political experience. The life

of the imagination enables new ways of seeing, new frameworks of reference, much like the experience of play and fantasy in childhood that we examined in chapter one. Reading Williams' Hegel together with his reading of Dostoevsky raises Dostoevsky's work to its philosophical significance because only philosophy can ask the artistic endeavour to think about the nature of what it is and does.

In *Faith in the Public Square*, he writes that 'imaginative construction, verbal or visual, works to make present an aesthetic object that allows itself to be contemplated from a perspective or perspectives other than those of the artists' own subjectivity' (Williams, 2012: 13). We are invited to think the world and ourselves in such a way that it is 'never reducible to an instrumental account' (Williams, 2012: 13) of things. This is why it is not only Williams' philosophical writing that is important for us to understand. It is also carried in his extraordinarily insightful readings of literature, poetry and music, which are central elements to a healthy functioning society because imaginative expansion 'works in [and for?] the foundation of a general ethic' (Williams, 2012: 13), a life imagined as free in relation to the other.

What Williams finds Dostoevsky doing in relation to the idea of the diabolical, is writing powerful stories of the descent into illusion, drama, violence and manipulation. This is, for us as his readers, to recognise these descents in us and to know our complicity in the descents of others. But it is not only the diabolical that is traced in the novels. To recognise the demonic at work requires also that we recognise the 'holy', that which resists the demonic. And it is the centrality of the dialogical narratives that tells us something of what the holy looks like in human life. This presents us with the processes and experiences of recognition.

## Dialogue and Recognition

Williams sees the dialectical negotiations of speech and exchange present in the great dialogical substance of Dostoevsky's novels, and so the place where real truth emerges and shows itself as resistance to the demonic forces of language previously discussed. Negotiation here is nothing but the 'appeal for recognition between one speaker and another or between speaker and hearer' (Williams, 2008: 108). It asks, are we intelligible within the structures of dialogue and negotiation such that we recognise each other's negotiations as somehow like my own? Dialogue, for Williams, is a central struggle for recognition, one that we must remember, carries misrecognition as part of its truth.

Keeping in mind what negotiation and self-dispossession are for Williams, we can see that Dostoevsky's dialogues structure a 'logic' of self-dispossession so that certain models of selfhood are

'dismantled and rejected' (Williams, 2008: 112) as the fiction unravels. The dialogical movement of the novels means that there is no standpoint not already conditioned by the actualities of the relations constituting the dialogue. The same goes for us as readers and for Dostoevsky as author. He invites us to 'take up this or that position and see what can be seen from there' (Williams, 2008: 112). This challenges both authorial intention and authorial resolution in what, for Williams I suggest, is a sort of 'culture' of authorial presence.

For Williams this has something to do with Dostoevsky's own faith. Faith writes itself out in the novels, becomes an object to itself. This is how faith and fiction work. But, we must not underestimate just how difficult this is when there is 'no manifest and unchallengeable last word in the process of human exchange' (Williams, 2008: 113). The diabolical takes hold when the particularities involved in speech and interaction are subsumed or silenced in the name of a greater cause or end. This is why Dostoevsky keeps us immersed in the negotiations of his characters because only in them, do we glimpse truth moving and sustaining itself. The contrast in the novels between diabolical narratives and holy ones has to do with the extent to which negotiation and self-dispossession are risked as the work of recognition. 'If the Devil's aim is silence, God's is speech, the dialogic speech by which we shape each other' (Williams, 2008: 113).

Dostoevsky writes in such a way that 'every perception is already "voiced", already associated with "the position of a personality"' (Williams, 2008: 112). We see that arguments, thoughts and opinions emerge in the *time* of their being appropriated, heard, understood or misunderstood, which means that they come out of the specific voices of the human, in dialogue. Clearly, Williams sees the famously polyphonic nature of Dostoevsky's narrative structure doing justice to the experience of being a subject where there is 'no manifest and unchallengeable last word' (Williams, 2008: 113), only the continuing of dialogical exchange. It is again the reason why truth is far 'more than either a private ideology or a neutral description' (Williams, 2008: 113). It emerges only in the negotiations of human speech and interaction. One of the reasons that the dialogical narratives are so important for Williams is that he sees Dostoevsky's intention being to represent God's authorship in and as the relatedness of language. This means that there is a sort of speculative writing going on here in the sense that it sustains the ambiguities concerning negation and resolution so that these ambiguities come to write themselves as changed, as having yielded a new way of understanding things.

But Williams' examination of dialogue raises again the question of mutuality. On the one hand, he argues that negotiation is always already about some sort of quest for convergence, for mutuality, and he sees this expressed in the tensions and difficulties of dialogue. But as we have already seen, we must be careful not to posit a 'middle' between self and other that in actuality appears only as a

broken middle. The actuality of negotiation, as the thesis has explored it, is a master and slave relation which, however, is formative for the relation between self and other. The *substance* of recognition is the *subject* which breaks the frame of reference by which mutuality is known.

But I want to argue, as I have done in the last chapter, that Williams' examination of this in Dostoevsky captures something of Hegel's 'pathway of doubt' and so therefore the failure of what appears as a reconciling recognition. The experience of loss in the novels carves out an exposure and vulnerability to negation which yields a 'conscious insight' into untruth, an insight which becomes, in various ways, the content of a different way of seeing. Some characters, of course, attempt to go back to a beginning which is certain, but the processes of dialogue and continuing relation mean that, for some, the struggle risks itself and makes itself the content of a self-education, which in Dostoevsky, is the life of truth. Dialogue is the education of consciousness, for the self 'is not a finished thing' (Williams, 2008: 114). To be a subject is not to know oneself completely but for knowledge of oneself to be articulated over time so that 'there is always more to be said' (Williams, 2008: 115).

One of the examples that Williams gives of the dismantling of selfhood, is in *Crime and Punishment* concerning the 'unbroken interior monologue' (Williams, 2008: 116) of Raskolnikov in his increasing attempts to assert the absolute truth of the will. It is the obsessive voice of one who seeks an identity which does 'not have to be negotiated or achieved' (Williams, 2008: 116), a voice rarely 'interrupted by a real other' (Williams, 2008: 116). It is the voice of someone who has lost the ability 'to hear and speak' (Williams, 2008:116), which is a person who is 'already potentially a murderer' (Williams, 2008: 116) because he is not implicated in otherness at all. Raskolnikov has no others to mediate this inner dialogue.

In Tubbs, we see this to be the 'sanctuary of a dialectic of nihilism, inwardly experienced as the yearning for a restoration of itself [which Raskolnikov yearns for throughout the novel] with the freedom that is deserting it' (Tubbs, 2008: 82). For Raskolnikov, the world increasingly eludes his grasp. The novel immerses us in his interior monologue. But eventually we emerge with him, in a process of externalisation, to his being 'able to hear and speak' (Williams, 2008: 115). But in true Dostoevsky fashion, the ending for Raskolnikov is left open, still ambiguous, so that we are left with 'a very odd sort of penitence' (Williams, 2008: 115). Williams is drawn to the ability of Dostoevsky to hold ambiguity in this way and yet still find a truth in its movement to and from resolution.

A diabolical self in Dostoevsky is one which avoids dialogue, and so avoids being recognised, having a past, being involved with others. It is self-constituted by the avoidance of relation, of being observed



and of committing to others and being committed to. This is a self which allows 'no human response' (Williams, 2008: 123) to be made. Pyotr in *Devils* is Williams' example here. But interestingly, he notes that there is one moment where Pyotr becomes 'painfully incarnate' (Williams, 2008: 123) and this is at the moment of Kirrilov's suicide. He is left in the next room to Kirrilov who is about to shoot himself. But when no shot is heard Pyotr goes into the room and sees a silent and still Kirrilov against the wall. As Pyotr comes close to Kirrilov's face, Kirrilov grabs Pyotr's hand and bites his finger. Kirrilov immediately shoots himself. It is a moment where the usually disconnected Pyotr is brought by Kirrilov 'into connection with his own body by inflicting acute pain' (Williams, 2008: 123) which is a real moment of being rooted to 'a time and place' (Williams, 2008: 124) through real 'anguish and fear' (Williams, 2008: 124).

Williams writes that the demonic characters are those who are 'imperfectly visible' (Williams, 2008: 117) in contrast to those who take the risks of being seen. We are reminded of the concept of the veil in Hawthorne that we explored in chapter five, the veil which symbolises the masking of freedom's relation to death. The narratives in Dostoevsky, show us myriad ways in which this veil is experienced and undone. We could argue that, for Williams, the 'undoing' of the veil is a deeper (mutual?) level of recognition between selves, a sort of truthful becoming visible. For Tubbs, it is the beginning of philosophical experience as 'know thyself', not so much a question of recognition but recollection, because it is recollection that carries the educative substance of the subject who recognises their relation to death and the other. This sense of being visible is a theme we also find in Rose at the end of *Love's Work* as she recollects a negative life, its losses, failures, joys and its loving and being loved. Recollection is her becoming profoundly visible and invisible. Yet, if the actuality of love's work is recollection as learning, which I argue it is, then it is also her 'old age' and thus her ability to 'pass unnoticed' (Rose, 2011: 144), which is what she aspired to do – veiled and unveiled in the 'revel of ideas and risk' (Rose, 2011: 144).

What the dialogical encounters in the novels do then is provide freedom with the experience of relation. The 'speaking other-becomes the condition of any freedom that is more than an exercise of the will for its own sake' (Williams, 2008: 133). This is why dialogue is of central importance to Dostoevsky for is able to write what freedom is by writing its life as dialogue and engagement. Dialogue is the 'uncontrolled territory' (Williams, 2008: 132) which 'brings into being' (Williams, 2008: 132) the inner life of freedom. It is not the fixed essence of a self needing to be revealed, but the inner life which sees oneself and the world afresh, a seeing that challenges any notion of an identity 'ready-made'.

For Williams, this makes the negotiations of dialogue the struggle for, and the essence of, a recognition which is enacted in the speech that is 'hearable' (Williams, 2008: 134) if it is to be speech at all. And to be hearable is for dialogue to carry our 'misspeaking' that 'prompts me to allow time for the probing of another's misspeaking' (Williams, 2008: 135). In this way the novels are read by Williams to be a recording of the drama of recognition and misrecognition, of our failing to achieve the right speech about who we are, but the continuing of speech nonetheless. It means there can never be 'a last word', as he puts it.

The principle of dialogue is the 'followability' inherent to the process of speaking, how it is that we keep communicating in such an uncontrolled environment. To understand how dialogue works is to understand dialectical experience as historically grounded in the actual relations of self and other. It is, he says, to begin a reflection which moves us beyond the merely childhood experience of choosing to an 'adult sense of choice' (Williams, 2008: 145) which knows the costs and limits to the actions we take. What Williams observes in dialogue is an 'ethics of recognition' (Williams, 2008: 146). Dostoevsky represents what is recognisably a '*human* decision' (Williams, 2008: 146) and makes it 'part of a narrative of learning' (Williams, 2008: 146). This narrative is rooted in the dialogue which is a 'trajectory... toward life' (Williams, 2008: 146) but the life which is always learning of loss. But such a path recognises in another the temptations of a freedom to 'turn itself inwards' (Williams, 2008: 146) because it has learned something about itself that enables a certain solidarity with those closed off from such self-awareness.

I want to argue at this point however, that without the sustained critique of the master and slave dialectic to underpin this analysis of recognition and dialogue, Williams is perhaps too comfortable with the idea that dialogue's education leads to mutuality or to a form of 'communion' amongst selves. He sees an individualistic account of freedom as undermined by a dialectic of engagement which keeps the broken relation between self and other 'broken' and thus always open to change, revisable, able to be tested and re-negotiated. But the dialectic is seen to express a mutual '*necessity for recognition*' (Williams, 2008: 134) which if the failures and negations are trusted and understood, enable a transcending of rivalry in a community of negotiating individuals learning about their freedom in relation to each other. He writes that 'dialogue goes on because of a trust that recognition will be possible' (Williams, 2008: 135) and so suggests that the relation is mutually significant because of dialogue is learning.

But without the language of master and slave it misses the actuality of learning as an end in itself. If in the master and slave relation, 'I am already other but the other is not me', then the only thing we can say about dialogue is not that it is 'communion' but, that it is education. Learning here is the

*only truth* it can have and it carries the truth of the failure of recognition as recollection. Recollection is perhaps the speculative leap not always visible or made in Williams, requiring as it would a more sustained examination of the significance of the *Aufhebung* in Hegel as the movement of the life and death and master and slave relations. And yet, Williams uses the language of education throughout his work, especially in relation to difficulty. This is why *Education in Hegel* yields a sadness at the truth of who we are for learning carries its own failures without overcoming them.

But where Tubbs writes of sadness, Williams writes of 'love'. This is to make a distinction which is too marked, but it is made in order to raise the theological implications of this way of thinking for Williams. Love here is the concretely free speech and act, the movement of spirit that gives of oneself to the learning of the other. It is Christ's life and death enacted in and as the eternal love of God for humanity. In this way, love is 'the assuming of responsibility' (Williams, 2008: 150) for the other. Tubbs might say that it is the assuming of responsibility for education which can be nothing but the 'inaugurated mourning' (Rose, 1996: 71) carried in and by loss, vulnerability and the other. But what does this taking responsibility for all mean for Williams?

Exploring the famous discussion in *The Brothers Karamazov* by Father Zosima about taking responsibility for all, Williams argues that we see what the unintended consequences of 'tak[ing] responsibility for someone else' (Williams, 2008: 163) means. Such 'actions...carry serious risk' (Williams, 2008: 163) with no guarantee of a successful outcome. When Father Zosima prostrates himself before Mitya it is because he sees 'the spiritual renewal of someone who knows himself to be an unsaintly man and yet called to what all human beings are called to – universal responsibility' (Williams, 2008: 164). In Mitya's case, his present inability to realise taking responsibility for all is mitigated by the integrity of his intention to do so which becomes 'gradually "incarnated" in more and more complex circumstances – being tested in the dialogue, the more-to-be-said, of the novel's process' (Williams, 2008: 164). Here, 'responsibility is at least the acknowledgement of a fractured relation between humanity-specifically each person's soul – and the rest of creation for which human beings have to take the blame' (Williams, 2008: 165).

But how do we take responsibility for all when we are increasingly isolated by the rhetoric of freedom as the freedom to choose? In Dostoevsky, the isolated self of a modern freedom is a sign of the demonic when that self is paralysed by a reality in which the other is not present. Williams is on home territory here and sees Father Zosima's discussion of freedom akin to the prevailing view of consumer choice in modern day capitalism. We are more than ever isolated by a freedom defined in terms of the satisfaction of desire. All that happens is that 'the wealthy are lonely and depressed' (Williams, 2008: 166), presumably because the gratification of desires is only fleeting, whilst 'the

poor [are] resentful and vengeful' (Williams, 2008: 166) without the means to satisfy what desires they have been told they have a right to satisfy. 'A person who is self-enslaved can only live an isolated life, with a steady decrease in joy' (Williams, 2008: 166).

But part of taking responsibility for all is also to recognise complicity. To recognise that 'an angry or contemptuous face will pass on its own lesson to any child you pass in the street' (Williams, 2008: 167) is to know that only 'universal forgiveness' (Williams, 2008: 167) will do. Referring to Mitya's taking responsibility for the sin of another at the end of *Karamazov*, Williams writes that whether solidarity with the sinner is achieved or not, for it could be misinterpreted or rejected, the point is that a humility, a servitude to the other is still required; 'virtue has not enlightened others' (Williams, 2008: 168), but 'you-must work for [the] sake of the whole' (Williams, 2008: 168).

We have seen Williams argue that this is a work that only we can decide to undertake. It is in the nature of such a work to refuse the temptations of an identity without limit and vulnerability. It asks instead, that we risk the weight of the voice that is other. So a certain sort of death of the self is entailed but the death we know to be formative because it is carried by the life which knows its relation to death differently. What has died is the need to be self-defining without the other. This in turn means that to take responsibility for another is not to take responsibility away from them but somehow to invite them to be freely what they are because it is possible to speak about the needs or hopes of the other, to be 'answer[able] for what is not myself' (Williams, 2008: 171) without making those needs or hopes my own. Mitya's dream shows him the 'vast, anonymous suffering of strangers' (Williams, 2008: 171) and when he wakes to find that a stranger has shown kindness to him by putting a pillow beneath his head, he comes to see that 'any act of hatred against another is a betrayal of all and any act of generosity to another is an affirmation of all' (Williams, 2008: 171). It sets Mitya on a path to self-surrender but not self-denial and so therefore a journey of education.

It is a negation which re-cognises relation to the other, a dialectical process which moves in the direction of mutual recognition because it is a *narrative* of 'discovering what the other can say in one's own voice, and what one can say in the other's voice' (Williams, 2008: 174). His reading of Hegel argues that mutual recognition is always what freedom presses toward because even the inescapable violences that are a part of speech and action, seek recognition. The violence of subjectivity presupposes a sort of 'rebellion against a solitary withdrawal and closure; and in appealing to otherness in that way, is obliquely connected with love's search for life in the other' (Williams, 2000: 179).

## The Soul

In the end, this discipline of self-negation as a process of learning and recognition is, for Williams, a question of the soul. In *Lost Icons* he describes the soul as a 'whole way of speaking, of presenting and 'uttering' the self, that presupposes relation as the ground that gives the self room to exist, a relation developing in time, a relation with an agency which address or summons the self' (Williams, 2000: 160). What makes the soul possible is 'in itself no part of the system of interacting and negotiation speakers in the world' (Williams, 2000: 160) and so is some sort of 'absence' (Williams, 2000: 180), but an absence which only 'shows itself' within the world of negotiating speakers. We will explore what this might mean for Williams further in the last chapter. But for now, we can see that the paradoxes present here indicate his articulating of the third partner of relation, what for him, is the 'non-negotiable' element of human experience. He sees it to be the underlying conditions for the life of the soul whose negative truth enables the "skill" of being seen' (Williams, 2000: 175) in the shared life of intelligible action. The growth of the soul is nothing but a learning of some sort of dispossession.

In the language of Tubbs, this soul is the whole of the way that truth is known and experienced as subjective substance. It makes the self-dispossessing life of truth an education for its own sake. This does not allow for reconciliations. The soul is freedom to learn. In Williams, the soul is also part of the process of learning; that which is made possible in and by the triune nature of God's dispossessioning life. He sees it to be a reconciling education between God and Man and within human relations.

When the master and slave and life and death relations are put into play however, there is a way to think about reconciliation differently. Whereas reconciliation seen as unity or as life after death or as mutual recognition, is abstract, because a beyond of social and political experience, reconciliation understood to be the *experience* (master and slave) of the difference between God and man, self and other, substance and subject 'and not in the overcoming of the difference' (Tubbs, 2008: 165) becomes education for its own sake. But when the language of reconciliation runs away with Williams, as it does at times, it is never without the difficulties of this experience of difference which he certainly gives substance to throughout his writing. It is one of the reasons why I argue there is an implicitly educational bent in Williams philosophical thinking and why I bring Tubbs to bear on this element at times.

## The Iconic Soul

One of the ways that Williams articulates the emergence of the soul is through the concept of 'icons', more specifically, of iconic experience. The reason I want to discuss this is because it is where

we find a theory of education in Williams most visibly expressed and where his theories of negotiation and self-dispossession converge with what he sees to be the actualities of a life of faith. We know that the Dostoevsky book was something that Williams had wanted to write for a number of years. As early as 2000 in *Lost Icons*, we see him employing the meaning of icons as a way to think philosophically about social and political experience. He notes a certain devaluing of the term icon in contemporary Western societies, particularly its use as a definition for a certain sort of celebrity status. But even here, he says, we glimpse something of what icons were or used to stand for as 'a common point of reference... a common touchstone of acceptability' (Williams, 2000: 1).

Emerging in the eighth century, the Eastern Orthodox church 'elaborated a theory and practice of *pictorial* representation corresponding to the theory and practice of *verbal* representation' (Williams, 2000: 184). These icons, depicting stories from the Bible or significant figures and events, were not meant to show what things actually looked like but were visual ways of 'bringing us into a new place and a new perception' (Williams, 2000: 184). This new way of seeing is a 'source of illumination independent of them' (Williams, 2000: 2). Put simply, the religious icon gives us 'a window into an alien frame of reference that is at the same time the structure that will make definitive sense of the world we inhabit' (Williams, 2000: 2). And the source which enables this seeing is the heart of structures and relations within the frame of the icon itself as they act in such a way as to draw the eye, not to an abstract centre point, but to 'something at work *in* the luminous surface itself' (Williams, 2000: 185). The icon engages us, 'reads us' and invites that we let ourselves be seen. We could say that what the icon *is*, is also what it does. It invites the act of self-dispossession, of giving ourselves to the losses involved in contemplation, and so evokes the non-existent other.

Icons then are a 'cultic object' (Williams, 2008: 201) which 'offer a context of narrative and self-identification' (Williams, 2008: 200), a background against which human negotiations have and generate meaning. But they also point to what is 'potentially tragic' (Williams, 2008: 200) in human affairs because they show us what, if absent, destroys the potential for meaning and learning. They keep open the 'more' that can be said and so 'inform us that our lives are serious' (Williams, 2008: 200), that our past, our speech and our choices require to be thought.

However, 'the divine image establishes itself not by universally compelling attraction but by its endurance through disruption and defilement' (Williams, 2008: 208) precisely the substance of so much of Dostoevsky's narratives. It is the 'desecration' of icons in the novels that is the important point because their holiness lies in their being 'powerless' (Williams, 2008: 208). History will inevitably break them, it must if they are to yield an iconic truth. The question of Christ against the

truth can now be seen against this backdrop. For Christ is the face of God where God is 'seen' in a certain light, in the light of the experience of Christ's negation, the darkness of Calvary and of the actualities of this negation in human freedom. It is this which sustains the image in and by relation to brokenness. 'A vulnerable image is not an empty one. (Williams, 2008: 208).

In the terms of an iconic other, it is not an absolute otherness 'repairing my identity' (Williams, 2008: 28) but an other who seeks for a more mediated relation to 'nourish and augment what I am' (Williams, 2008: 208). Williams believes that subjective experience makes us all in some sense led toward an iconic relation to the other, whether he sees this as mutual or otherwise. Although he also asserts that through Dostoevsky's relentless commitment to the negation and sufferings of selfhood, mutual recognition is translated 'into the most uncompromising terms of narrative risk, self-venturing, and self-loss' (Williams, 2008: 211). This is, I argue, where the truth of Williams' own struggles to understand recognition are located.

If this 'eye' of the icon is the work of the 'I', of being seen differently, then we have to give Williams the educational language that this suggests. Only in recollection, for Tubbs, can we be what we are not. In this sense, we might also say that the iconic stands for the non-existent other as recollection, which is why it 'does not occupy a space *alongside* me, does not share the dimension I inhabit' (Williams, 2000:186). For Tubbs, it would be where we are, only when we *are* learning. This is something of why Williams translates the meaning of icons into a theory of iconic experience because the iconic is any structure or pattern which enables the skills for intelligible action to be nurtured.

Dostoevsky's world, which is primarily the orthodox world of monasteries, confession and sacrament, is a world where icons are central to the life of the community. There are a number of narratives in the novels surrounding icons, but the stories of desecration interest Williams the most because they say something about the nature of the sacred in its brokenness. What we find is that a 'person whose world is shaped by what the icon embodies' (Williams, 2008:200) is also one who is 'vulnerable' (Williams, 2008:200) to what it makes us see. He writes,

'The icon as a cultic object shows brokenness healed and plurality reconciled, but translated into the terms of a human biography, the icon must be a story, a process, that shows the reality of a life that is disrupted by loss or sin and still faithful to the world that the icon manifests, faithful enough to become answerable for that world's reality and power' (Williams, 2008:201).

But icons, whether they are objects or biographies, are not 'timeless image[s] of holiness' (Williams, 2008:202). The holy is a 'history of disruption and self-recovery' (Williams, 2008:202) which can only

be the history, the experience of a subjectivity 'unequivocally modern' (Williams, 2008:203). The iconic dimension of loss then is the ability to learn, to re-conceive the self in the experience of contradiction and error so that experience is made the formative content of a relation to the world and to the other.

This makes the world of subjective experience, of 'self-doubt' (Williams, 2008: 205) potentially an iconic one. The realm of the iconic is not 'ready made' (Williams, 2008: 202). This would undermine what we have already seen to be a different understanding of truth in Dostoevsky. Rather, to be iconic is to be someone who learns, who 'grows into holiness' (Williams, 2008:205) and so the life we recognise to be a 'narrative icon' (Williams, 2008:205). It can be argued that we see in the iconic life, the depths of loss and the complexities of self-recovery which have refused to withdraw from the difficulties of actuality. But to recognise the holy in another is also to be changed in turn, to be invited into an iconic world which 'draws more out of the icon itself [because] it is not something that we can finish with' (Williams, 2008:207). An iconic life for Williams, precisely because it is rooted in the actualities of human freedom, calls us to God in learning. Whether this means that iconic experience is also God's education is a difficult one to answer.

But the dialectical implications of this for a theology of iconic experience are that God is seen in the terms of *kenosis* and so a self-dispossessing divinity that invites its own truth to be told and experienced. The kenotic life of God is capable of being represented, and this means that it is also 'caught up in processes of seeing and not-seeing' (Williams, 2008:207), appropriated in ways which make it vulnerable but therein always changeable: 'the Word of God is not naturally and visibly the last word in history as it proceeds' (Williams, 2008:207). This, I suggest, might mean that iconic experience for Williams, is God's 'skill in being seen' in and as subject. But this would mean asking him about the significance of recollection. If God can only be what he is in what he is not, substance as subject, then God can only know himself in the education which knows itself as subjective substance, as education. But, one of the things that we can say about Williams' theory of the iconic and his reading of Dostoevsky as a whole, is that the 'iconic eye remains wakeful' (Williams, 2000:187).

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented merely a snapshot of the way that Williams' philosophical thought underpins his analysis of Dostoevsky. But whilst we cannot pin this work down to a strict Hegelian stance, it is my argument that by reading his Hegel and his Rose into his work, we are drawn to its



significantly philosophical and educational dimension, one which is fundamentally bound up with his view of the difficulty of God.

## Teacher and Priest, God and Education

*All my life is broken unto you, and all my glory soiled unto you. Do not let the spark of my soul go out in the even sadness. Let me raise the brokenness to you, to the world where the breaking is for love. Do not let the words be mine, but change them into truth. With these lips instruct my heart, and let fall into the world what is broken in the world.* (Cohen, 1984: Book 49)

### Introduction

The arguments that I have been developing thus far in the thesis have, I hope, given the reader a sense of the relation between the work of Rowan Williams and Nigel Tubbs through what I have argued are their shared roots in Gillian Rose's reading of Hegel. I have argued that Williams and Tubbs are working to retrieve the difficulties, or what we have called the broken middles, of social, political and philosophical experience, both in their writing and in the work that they do as priest and teacher respectively. And I have argued that in very different ways, they understand the experience of these broken middles to be the formative substance of modern consciousness.

In Tubbs, we see a continuation of the project begun by Rose to retrieve a thinking of the absolute in Hegel. It becomes a compelling theory of learning worked through in the difficult middle between philosophy and education. For Williams, I suggest that there is a working with the negative and the speculative that yields an implicitly educational philosophy and insight which presses him towards thinking a philosophical notion of God. Williams' Hegelianism informs a profoundly philosophical voice able to retrieve and articulate the actualities of social and political experience and to find in others the depths and the truth of these experiences as they have been represented in art, literature, poetry, music, philosophy, theology and faith. In particular, his reading of Dostoevsky allows this understanding of negative and speculative experience to find its most profound voice yet in a writer who, for Williams, not only writes the negative out as it is lived and suffered on the pages of his novels, but who also invites us to be open to the ways in which freedom learns about itself therein.

I have also argued that Williams' Hegelianism has found a home in his theory of negotiation and self-dispossession and in his theory of the iconic, the latter embodying what I believe to be the most educational concept of truth in his work. This is because the iconic becomes a way for him to

articulate the relation between immediacy and mediation and the philosophical relation to immediacy and mediation as the 'eye' of the individual and the humanity which learns. It is in the concept of iconic experience that Williams expresses the re-orienting of vision that achieving a relation to negative experience yields. The 'iconic eye' (Williams, 2000: 187) is able to risk its ordinary way of seeing and to trust in the process of learning therein. It is the eye which learns to live with uncertainty and with the 'time' that it takes to understand without a diabolical retreat into the refusals of actuality, history and the temporal and material life of commitment and risk.

The work of Tubbs is a profound engagement with the relation between philosophy and education thought through with what he argues to be the aporetic logic of modern thought. I have shown that through a particular reading of Hegel's master and slave and life and death relations, Tubbs offers philosophy its higher education as recollection. I have tried to give the reader a sense of both the essence and the demand of his thinking and the challenge that it carries to 'know thyself' as education. My contention is that these two very different 'projects' in the contemporary world share a fruitful yet difficult Hegelian 'middle' between philosophy and religion which risks itself as learning.

I want now in this last chapter, to discuss the work of Williams and Tubbs in the context of what they do as priest and as teacher. This is because there is pedagogical significance to the notion of negative and speculative experience for both the priest and the teacher who intervene, in various ways, in the lives of others. This is particularly so when that intervention is in and for the truth of the negative. And if truth is understood to be subjective substance, to be 'actual only as system' (Hegel, 1977: 15), then we have to ask what this means for the priest and the teacher whose work with others attempts to do justice to this truth, to the spiritual actuality of the philosophical life. How are the difficulties and dilemmas of intervention in and for doubt, uncertainty, loss and risk, understood by Williams and Tubbs?

These questions relate to the difficulties of understanding not only how power and authority are mediated but how philosophical consciousness relates to its own mediation. If the experience of power is dialectical, then philosophical experience commends its own education about itself. It asks that it not be ignorant of its own relation to the other, for it to recognise the actualities within which it too operates and understands itself. But in what sense does this enable the truth of the other, the slave or the student, to know subjective substance? In what follows, I will explore these questions for a philosophy of the priest and teacher. I will do this with the aid of Tubbs' *Philosophy of the Teacher* which brings Hegelian speculative experience to bear on the teacher/student relation. I will then consider whether there is a philosophy of the priest here which might help us better understand the power and pedagogy of Williams.

## The Philosophical Teacher

In *Philosophy of the Teacher* Tubbs argues that there is a deeply philosophical education to be had in the difficulties of the relation between authority and freedom, theory and practice in the teacher/student relation. The teacher who is troubled by her own power, by the imposition of a certain model of education, its curriculum, its outcomes and thus its representation of and determination within specific social and political relations, can find a substantial education in a speculative thinking of these experiences. Tubbs argues that rather than suppressing, despairing of, or seeking to overcome, the *aporias* of teaching, its struggles and anxieties are instead formative for the teacher and the student in the actualities and risks of the relation.

These negations and struggles within education are not new however. Socrates' famous negative pedagogy of midwifery caused upset among the men of Athens because of the culture of doubt that he created through his form of questioning. That which put the mind and knowledge into question, into a relation with itself in a burgeoning era of self-consciousness was dangerous and corrupting. The emerging reflective mind experienced relation to the object as a relation of opposition. Any external negation of the object led consciousness to become aware of its own negative nature. No longer was knowledge based on perception, on the notion that things are always 'in process of coming to be' (Plato, 1997: 169). Rather, it was a much more complicated process of knowledge, which was to be understood through the teasing out of its contradictions by external negation.

Hence Socrates proclaimed that he knew nothing. His method sought to aid the deepening consciousness of knowledge in others. Through questioning he would 'apply all possible tests...to determine whether the young mind is being delivered of a phantom, that is, an error, or a fertile truth' (Plato, 1997: 167). Socrates did not call himself a teacher because he did not see his method of questioning to be the same as the authoritative teaching practices of his day. Instead, teaching as midwifery was servant to the truth of knowledge in 'the travail of others' (Plato, 1977: 167) so that his interlocutors could 'discover within themselves a multitude of beautiful things' (Plato, 1977: 167). It is, as he says at his trial, 'a heavy burden' (Plato, 1977: 22) but nonetheless, a relentless commitment to the negative on his part because 'the unexamined life is not worth living' (Plato, 1977: 33). It was a negative he was willing to die for.

But the integrity of his questioning has implications for how we understand the responsibility that comes with negative intervention. For Kierkegaard, Socrates asked questions 'without an interest in the answer except to suck out the apparent content by means of the question and thereby to leave an emptiness behind' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 36). Socratic irony, for Kierkegaard, was merely the self-

satisfaction of one who 'placed individuals under his dialectical vacuum pump, pumped away the atmospheric air they were accustomed to breathing, and left them standing there' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 178). This would be in contrast to the philosophical experience of the negative that we find in Hegel which, as aporetic logic, is determinate negation. A teacher who understands the negative to have a content in experience, is the teacher who does not leave the student empty or despairing, but the teacher who understands that the destroyed ground of the question has its truth in the one who is re-formed by its loss. Doubt does, or, is, something.

Hegel also writes about the difficulties of teaching. In a letter to Niethammer concerning the problem of teaching philosophy to twelve year olds, he wrote that philosophy 'is a treasure of hard-won, ready prepared, formed content. This inheritance ready at hand must be earned by the individual, i.e. learned. The teacher possesses this treasure, he pre-thinks it. The pupils rethink it' (Hegel, 1984: 280). The Hegel of the pathway of doubt is here, the Hegel who is certain of his authority, the one who knows the necessity and power of intervention in the lives of those yet to learn what the teacher knows. Hegel demanded quietness, obedience and sustained attention from his pupils, understood by him to be the disciplined life required by philosophy. But within this discipline of study, he also placed great importance on the independence of his students, for therein, independence was educated. Kierkegaard wrote that Hegel knew that the negative 'was an element in thought itself...[that] it asks and answers itself within itself' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 35) so that the work can only ever be one's own. This meant for Hegel, that the teacher takes responsibility for an education about the illusions of the abstractions his pupils did not yet understand. For Tubbs, the teacher carries this treasure of speculative experience as difficulty and as risk but also as vocation. It is once again within the framework of master and slave that Tubbs understands this as a philosophy of the teacher.

I have shown in previous chapters that the relation of master and slave is a double movement. It is both the relation between two self-conscious individuals, thus presupposing prevailing political relations, and the relation of master and slave in the one self-consciousness. In the relation seen abstractly, the teacher is master and the student is slave. The teacher teaches and possesses knowledge. She is the one who defines the curriculum, the terms of relating and the one who is independent. The student is the one who is taught, dependent and defined by her 'success' in achieving what the teacher requires of her. The master defines her independence in the fact that she teaches whilst the student learns. The student reinforces this independence because she takes herself to be ignorant without the knowledge of the teacher. The student is the negative aspect of this relating. But the disparity which exists between the teacher and the student is 'the distinction

between them, the *negative* in general' (Hegel, 1977: 21 author's emphasis). It is on the one hand 'the defect of them both... [but] it is their soul, or that which moves them' (Hegel, 1977: 21). Hence we can see that the teacher's authority is dependent on the learning which is undertaken and realised by the student. This learning is what in fact constitutes her independence from the student, but because it is the work of learning which gives the teacher her authority, 'the truth of the independent teacher is accordingly the obedience and work of the student' (Tubbs, 2005: 167).

As far as the student sees it however, in relation to the teacher she is 'without education' (Tubbs, 2005: 167) in a negativity of ignorance and uncertainty. This is particularly true for students leaving home for the first time to go to university where all that previously constituted their identity – home, family, friends and interests – is unsettled or put into question. The student then reproduces her 'nothingness' through the work required of her by the teacher, by the system, by educational structures and marks. But like the slave, the student discovers her truth in this negativity in a way that the master cannot; 'the student, in fear and in work, reproduces his own negative educational truth' (Tubbs, 2005: 168). We see that the teacher's experience of the relation is inverted in an independence which turns out to be dependence, the opposite of what it appeared to be. The student on the other hand, turns out to be in truth, the opposite of dependence. The student discovers 'a mind of his own' (Tubbs, 2005: 168) in negativity and is now the truth of the student as the learning individual. This 'moving principle of the negative' (Hegel, 1977: 21) which is the relation of teacher and student 'appears' then as the distinction, but is just as much the movement of each in and as the relation between them.

But we must also remember that the political relation of master and slave as teacher and student is also the master and slave relation within the teacher and the student as self-relation. When the teacher thinks about the contradictions of her authority, when she thinks its failures and losses, her own experience of vulnerability can become the content of philosophical experience. The teacher 'becomes her own student' (Tubbs, 2005: 169), able to witness to and discover meaning for her identity and practice in the contradictions of her authority. The teacher comes to know that she carries her own servitude without suppressing the actuality of the relation in which she is also the master. Attempts to avoid the difficulties of power, all too easily close down the contradictions within which the teacher understands herself. This occurs either by exercising more power or by trying to overcome the problem of power in some form of mutual recognition. Both standpoints are a refusal to know the ambiguities of power as in any sense substantial. Such a teacher justifies their power or lack of power by reproducing the relations which prevailed in the first place. The philosophical teacher chooses instead to live this difficulty somehow and learn. In this way, the

dilemmas 'are true – not only because they are real, but true also because of their philosophical significance' (Tubbs, 2005: 169). This is where the teacher discovers that 'vocation' is the truth of what she already does because vocation is now recollection. In the same way that Rose argues that 'you discover that you are a philosopher, it is not something you ever become' (Rose, 1999: 44) the teacher discovers that she is a philosophical teacher in the vocation that is recollection.

There are political implications to the concept of work here however. The ambivalence of modern abstract freedom is that it can 'think the truth and fail to think the truth; we know of relation but also we are relation' (Tubbs, 2005: 176). Relation is always of the most intense political experience so that the teacher/student relation is also a presupposition which hides the conditions of the possibility of its experience in prevailing social relations. But modern philosophical experience of illusion 'is the truth of our political education in regard to our social determination' (Tubbs, 2005: 176). We discover that subjective consciousness is determined by the relation that a society has to work, Modern subjectivity is the experience of bourgeois private property relations, which is the rational freedom which knows relation to be freedom *from work* and *from relation*. Work becomes that which is 'performed by others' (Tubbs, 2005: 176).

Society's relation to work is now 'the re-presentation of freedom based in self-interest and the priority of the private person over the social (and indeed global) totality' (Tubbs, 2005: 176). But this is the teacher who as illusory consciousness learns that she is freedom and lack of freedom, an experience which is 'illusory and actual' (Tubbs, 2005: 177). Freedom is to learn<sup>60</sup> that the relation that we have to work acknowledges actuality and that the oppositions of social and political experience are re-formed as more and less than what they are. It is a political education 'realised as subjective formation' (Tubbs, 2005: 177). The 'natural' teacher does not know that her subjectivity and that of her student's is determined by the relation that a society has to work. The philosophical teacher however, knows the untruth of phenomenal relations and the relation of work therein, commends its own re-formation. As a political education 'the master and slave relation is how freedom is known by itself, where its actuality is unfreedom' (Tubbs, 2005: 178).

The importance of all this for Tubbs is that the teacher/student relation 'bears the weight of being the re-presentation of education itself' (Tubbs, 2005: 178). What he means by this is that in a modernity which masks the master and slave of social and political relations in a law of formal equality, the teacher/student relation becomes the dialectical experience by which education is

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<sup>60</sup> This is a term originally used by Tubbs as the title of the core modules in Modern Liberal Arts. It is now an increasingly significant phrase in Tubbs' work used to describe the concept and experience of philosophy's higher education. It is also the subtitle of a book due to be published in 2014 called *Philosophy and Modern Liberal Arts: Freedom is to Learn*.

subjective substance. And the teacher who teaches and continues to determine the political experience of the relation, in other words, the teacher who does not suppress actuality as the representation of 'subjective meaning' (Tubbs, 2005: 178), is the teacher who does not 'refuse our experience of freedom' (Tubbs, 2005: 178) and therein the education of her students own subjectivity.

I want now to offer an example of this philosophical practice by looking at the account given by Rose in *Paradiso* concerning her experience with two consultants whilst suffering from cancer. It invites us to think about the nature of the philosophical practitioner who we are now slowly becoming aware of as someone whose authority allows uncertainty and ambiguity to be the substance and integrity of what they do.

The first consultant that Rose meets is Dr Land. In 'judicious' and measured tones she tells Rose 'your cancer is active; this means you will become ill; this means you will need more treatment. How long do you intend to continue working?' (Rose, 1999: 44). Disconcerted by such predictions, she says, Rose goes to see another consultant, Dr Grove. She writes that 'with a deliberate gesture Dr Grove pushed aside the proliferating reports on my condition which littered his desk. 'Tell me' he invited, 'who you are and how you are' (Rose, 1999: 44). After a while, during which Rose tells him about her condition, Dr Grove says 'you are well; you are not dominated by this disease; we will keep you in this equilibrium. Is there anything you want to do that you cannot do?' (Rose, 1999: 44). This, she says, is the 'difference between a sentence of death and a sentence of life' (Rose, 1999: 44).

Dr Grove does not let the 'scientific map' (Rose, 1999: 45) of her disease, its truth determined and fixed, prejudice or predict her continuing experience of it or her relation to her own body. This is to 'incorporate the nursing definition of care into that of the specialist' (Rose, 1999: 45), the holistic approach which not only transfers the 'knitting of body and soul' (Rose, 1999: 46) back to her, but says that 'what you decide will right' (Rose, 1999: 45). It is an authority which knows that death still requires to be lived. The aporetic truth of life and death here discovers that there is 'no finality' (Rose, 1999: 45) because death lives itself in the life which knows death. This is the truth of death learnt in and by life as recollection. Dr Grove allows Rose to carry her illness as '*autopoiesis*', as the content of a self-determination denied by Dr Land.

Dr Land's mastery on the other hand, lies in independence from her patients, in the certainties of her medical knowledge and its control over illness. Vulnerability weakens authority. Dr Grove carries the truth of vulnerability as authority because he tells Rose that he does not know when she will die, 'what is causing this or that symptom' (Rose, 1999: 44). And what is remarkable about this relation



for Rose is its dialectical power. He 'does not permit you to transfer your authority to him, and so, paradoxically, you trust him more, because the trust is uncoerced and freely bestowed' (Rose, 1999: 45). The movement of the negative between them, yielded by his choice not to abrogate authority in the awareness of mediation, means that there is trust, and trust is extremely important for a relation in which power and powerlessness are engaged. We could say that like Dr Grove, the more the teacher enables the student to think her own freedom, the more the student lets the teacher teach. The dialectic between authority and freedom yields a powerful education for doctor and patient, teacher and student alike in the equivocation of a relation in which Grove and Rose know substance to be subject in and as the recollection of death in life.

Williams might call this philosophical practice self-dispossession or even 'self-gift' (Williams, 2007: 64) but only because it is also a risk, the risk that authority demands. Dr Grove is both power and vulnerability. He knows that you 'have to find your own way between what can be controlled and what can't be controlled and never confuses that border with his own quest for control and fear of lack of control' (Rose, 1999: 45). In this way his mediated and formative relation to his patients is also self-relation, a dialectic of power and vulnerability that makes his practice substantial.

Are we able now to speak in these terms about Williams as a philosophical priest? If, as I have shown, his theories of negotiation, self-dispossession and the iconic articulate the educative and philosophical substance of the dialectic, then it is here too that we will be able to grasp something of how he understands the experience of the modern self and its relation to truth. But to do this it is necessary first of all to say something about the notion of the third partner present in the background of his discussions.

## The Third Partner

Rose writes that 'people have absolute power over each other... [where] regardless of any covenant, one party may initiate a unilateral and fundamental change in the terms of relation without renegotiating them... Yet each party, woman, man, child in each, and their child, is absolute power as well as absolute vulnerability' (Rose, 1995: 60). One of her criticisms of feminism was that it did not know in what ways women were both power and vulnerability. She sought a different relation to the question of power arguing that it has a hidden 'third partner: the work' (Rose, 2011: 140). In the relation between Lover and Beloved, the third partner is the 'constant carnival; words, the rhythm and pace of [the] two, who mine undeveloped seams of the earth and share the treasure' (Rose, 2011: 141).

For Tubbs, we have seen this third partner to be also the aporetic work of spirit to know the truth of relation in all of its failures and repetitions, and to know this work as self-re-formation. But the third partner always hides itself in and as the determination of relation which is why oppositions are always 'torn halves of an integral freedom to which, however, they do not add up' (Adorno, 1999: 131). The third partner, for Tubbs, is subjective substance discovered and struggled with in and as philosophical education.

For Williams, the third partner has to do with the movement and education of the soul in its ever changing configurations of self in the actualities of social and political relations. The soul, as we saw in the previous chapter, is for Williams, that which presupposes relation, that which presupposes the non-negotiable element of the experience of self and other and so that which enables the whole of the life of negotiation and self-dispossession to be an experience of learning. For Williams, it is the divine life made manifest in and as relation. In this way the soul is the actuality of a 'regard beyond desire' (Williams, 2000: 161 emphasis removed).

It is this non-negotiable element that he calls the 'non-existent third term' (Williams, 2000: 158), that which is not reducible to will or description or representation. This is why it is analogous to 'gift' because it is the gift of a 'different kind of self-hood' (Williams, 2000: 16), one which develops in time as learning. It is absent in the sense that learning is the 'condition for a truthful recognition of my own limits' but 'not itself *a* point of view... not another system of desiring' (Williams, 2000: 154 author's emphasis). Only learning can be the 'this-and-not-that of temporal particularity' (Williams, 2000: 154).

This is, I argue, an idea of God in Williams which is akin to the philosophical third partner that we find in Rose and Tubbs. The language of God as absolutely other in his work, indicates therefore, not an unknowable or unmediated other but a God who *is* learning. God's otherness, for Williams, is radical enough to be the work of freedom. The third partner 'belongs *within* a discourse about what is made possible in relations between persons, yet does not reduce to an account of transactions between two desiring egos' (Williams, 2000: 161). Truth can be *nothing* but the relation which is in, and for, and as itself as learning for own sake.

Unfortunately, the only word that is missing here in Williams is education. This might well indicate a certain lack of faith in the truth he has stumbled across at such a deep level in his work. There are also times when he leans toward the notion that the third term is 'outside of the world of negotiation' (Williams, 2000: 161-2) and this is certainly misleading in the context of his overall argument. I argue that this is just a way for Williams to make known that the divine third term

cannot be 'seen' or represented ordinarily, neither reduced to explanation or object. God is the movement, loss and the 'more' of language, the gaps or the silences or the broken middles of truth which suspend our frameworks of reference by which we know God, yet also determine them. God is thus the very question and difficulty of God but thereby the gift of learning.

Like Rose and Tubbs, the third partner in Williams is also the work of relation, or what he calls the disciplined 'attention' given to its experience. It is attention which 'provide[s] a 'routinised', expected and accepted, experience of contradiction, so that the happening of the soul may build up steadily and consistently' (Williams, 2000: 150). The work of relation, and thus the work of God, is the beginning of a self-examination utterly fundamental for an 'authentic' Christian life of faith because the soul comes to know itself in God. But all this presents Williams with the same dilemmas as the teacher. How do you be master and servant, power and vulnerability, to this extraordinarily profound truth of the soul?

## The Philosophical Priest

So much of Williams work is about identifying the political and cultural 'enemies of the self in styles and fictions that erode difficulty' (Williams, 2000: 148). These are the temptations of a culture within which we can so easily descend into the personal dramas and melancholic woes of modern master and slave experiences, where uncertainty becomes the drama of a self-doubt which has only nihilistic landscapes upon which to lose itself. In *Lost Icons*, he gives an example of one of the ways in which the modern self seeks to know itself in the psychoanalytic relation and the problems and risks entailed in such an endeavour. In this example, we glimpse the relation of master and slave at work in Williams around the questions of power, dependency and learning.

In the psychoanalytic relationship, he writes that there is a very real risk that 'transference' will occur from analysand to analyst so that the truth discovered about the self in the relation is seen to belong to the analyst and her skills, rather than the labour and pain of the analysand. Similar risks occur in the teacher/student relation. The work that belongs to the student might have meaning only as it exists for and in relation to the teacher. The dialectical possibilities of the psychoanalytic relation are lost if the analyst permits the work of the analysand to become her own. To prevent transference the analyst is required to leave, or rather 'betray', the analysand in order that she discovers the self 'coming to birth in the process of experiencing frustrated desire' (Williams, 2000: 151).

The analyst, like the teacher, must provide the conditions for a negative experience which will be difficult and painful. Betrayal here can be seen to serve the negative life of the analysand as the self-

development of frustrated desire. The analyst, in this way, provides the educative experience of the master and slave relation. But this poses a risk for the analyst who can be seduced into becoming “necessary’ to the analysand’ (Williams, 2000: 152) in fulfilling their world. But this deprives authority of its own other. It avoids the difficulty of the analyst’s own frustrated desires for authority and power cannot know itself by becoming what the other desires. The analyst can only, like Dr Grove, negotiate her position and represent its ambiguities as formative because the complexities of the master and slave relation at work here, enable a truthful sense of self for both the analyst and the analysand if the awareness of the ‘incurable character of... desire’ (Williams, 2000: 153) is made the content of educative experience.

The philosophical analyst, we might say, like the philosophical doctor and teacher does not permit the transfer of authority to her. She does not claim to embody the ‘answer, a gratification, a terminus of desire’ (Williams, 2000: 151) for the analysand. Neither does she create an illusion of a ‘symmetrical mutuality of gratification in which the two parties are only ‘each other’s other’ (Williams, 2000: 154). Rather, the philosophical analyst knows that the experience of contradiction invokes the presence of a third partner. The relation is triune and acknowledges the liberating actuality which is prior to ‘the net of ideas and projections’ (Williams, 2000: 154) that reinforce the illusions of the self. And like the teacher, one of the difficulties the analyst must face is the awareness of causing pain and inner dislocation to the other. But the philosophical analyst would be the one who lets this difficulty mediate her taking responsibility for that experience, knowing that it is also her own vulnerability and sadness.

Williams’ own experience of power and authority was extraordinarily challenging, visible and difficult. It yielded enormous pressures, responsibilities and influence. To think about a philosophy of the priest in his work does not quite do justice to his time as the leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion. One of the things we can say however, is that his various interventions across the social, political and imaginative landscape, show us a man teaching and preaching with an integrity of the negative, someone who knows his power to be, not only mediated, but philosophically, a triune actuality, one which makes his power not only vulnerable and risky, but a spiritual work of the negative.

His authority and his interventions are most powerful because they seek to do justice to negative experience in others. He seeks to do justice to the dialectical nature of his relations to his audience. The philosophical work he commends in us, is our own work of freedom, the work to learn about death in life, the other in mastery and to learn what faith means in that learning. Like Rose, we trust him more because he does not force that trust. His work asks that we give it attention even when it

has no easy answers for us and that we trust to this difficulty. As a teacher and a priest he does not leave us stranded with the negative but helps us to find meaning there, to know the work of thinking, of loss, of speaking and negotiating as the truth of life in God.

Hence, Williams' pedagogy carries the ambiguities of power as humility. It is a humility which, I argue, can only come from the place which knows the truth of its thinking in loss and in learning. It could even be argued that such an educative underpinning to his work makes the ambiguities true and thus worth thinking through even more. Williams tends to nurture the conditions for negotiation and self-dispossession precisely because they are conditions for truth. This is why it does him a disservice to see his Hegelianism in terms of the simple thesis, antithesis and synthesis approach. This does not take into account Roses' influence concerning the philosophical drama of recognition and misrecognition, his reading of the contingent adventures of reason and the actualities of law which he understands to be the conditions of the possibility of truth. Williams knows all-too-well that truth carries a political actuality.

In one sense, Williams can be likened to Augustine. As Myers puts it, 'Augustine articulates truth about God by talking to God: the reader is an eavesdropper on his theology' (Myers, 2012: 99). With Augustine 'we are on the outside looking in, whereas in most theological writing it is the scholars who talk among themselves while God is presumed to be outside' (Myers, 2012: 99). Augustine's journey of recollection is something we find in Williams too, because it is the 'struggle for truthful speech' (Myers, 2012: 100) in the illusory experiences of modernity and power, which attempt so often to soften difficulty and reinforce unthought and uncritical relations.

To read Williams aporetically and not deterministically is to read, like Augustine, 'the writer's struggles...worked out on the written page' (Williams, 1979: 71) and to see the wider spiritual nature of his work as prayer. For Williams, 'untiring prayer, prayer at all times, is the central feature of this battle against slavery and illusion and sin' (Williams, 1994: 138). Prayer is the struggle of confession, the negation of the I in and for the struggle to not 'let God and the world fall apart from each other' (Williams, 1994: 139) in the experiences of failure, loss, pain and injustice. This is part of Augustine's pain, to know God in the 'memory of uncomprehended emotion' (Williams, 1979: 71-2) and it is the integrity of a spiritual work for Williams that is constantly deepening its relation to the suffering of humanity, including its own suffering at its complicity in the suffering of others. We might say that for Williams, this is how God learns in us.

In talking about Williams and Tubbs' pedagogy in this way I am trying to do justice to the substance of their work. The term justice is important in the thesis because it has to do with what I have

argued is the difficulty of philosophical experience as they have expounded it. Justice embodies the political, philosophical, spiritual and educational actuality of truth in those who struggle to understand themselves and the world, those who do justice to truth in themselves and in others because they '*labour* at... [their] own substance' (Williams, 2007: 73). This justice knows the difficulty of being incomplete, of losing oneself, of inner contradiction and therefore of risk and failure. It knows the tragic dimension of attempts to change the world but sees also the invitation to understand that lies at the heart of its failures. For Williams, this is the truth of the relation between God and man. For Tubbs, God, in and as philosophical learning, has something to do with the justice done to the relation between teacher and student, master and slave, life and death. God is discovered in the integrity of the teacher's subjective substance and the three years of a degree which enables students to find and learn that their own difficulties, questions and broken middles are subjective substance.

As far as Rose is concerned, difficulty was her broken middle through and through. Her work commends us also to work with the 'roaring and the roasting of the broken middle, and to know that it is 'I'' (Tubbs, 1998: 34). Difficulty also lies in our relation to Rose, in having to read her backwards and forwards time and again, struggling with the experience of her thinking to retrieve 'the absolute comedy' (Rose, 1996: 72) of Hegelian speculative experience. Rose also did justice to difficulty with her students, never refusing what the work demanded of them. And against the 'abandonment of reason' (Rose, 1993: 3) in post-modernity, reason too is to be trusted in its failures because only reason can 'bring[] to light what is difficult out of darkness and silence' (Rose, 1993: 4) within itself, and so be its own vulnerability, powerlessness and uncertainty.

For Williams, difficulty has been the intense visibility of an archbishop attempting to hold together a struggling church within the landscape of social, political and religious uncertainty. It has also been a pedagogy that has had to mediate itself according to its audience, one which does justice to where truth lives. One of the remarkable ways that he has managed to do this is that he has found a language; beautiful, poetic and Hegelian within the public arena, which speaks to the ambiguities of human experience without doing a disservice to the difficulty of actuality. This is because Williams sees the beginnings of philosophical experience to be 'whenever reactive emotion gives place to other responses, whenever it is possible to shift into other modes of relating to the situation... whatever still allows acceptance or peace or the taking of a new initiative' (Williams, 2000: 147). This tends not to characterise most academic environments. At the time of the writing of the thesis, Williams stepped down from being archbishop and became master of Magdalene College in

Cambridge. It will be interesting to see how the master of such an environment comes to understand his, and his institution's, own servitude and otherness.

But is this all just a question of rhetoric, of style? Augustine addressed this very concern in *On Christian Doctrine*. He asked how the arts of rhetoric were to be used in the service of Christian truth, how they were to be more than what he had denounced to be the 'cult of mere expression' in the classical arts, the rhetoric whose end was seen to lie in the success of the speaker. A great orator, says Augustine, is one who, citing Cicero, 'must speak so as to teach, to delight, and to persuade' (Augustine, 2009: 141). In one sense, Williams' pedagogy lies in the eloquence of his language and argument. It certainly carries a rhetorical element. But speech expresses the contradictions and ambiguities of truth also for Williams. It has too. The eloquence of his speech and his writing can therefore be nothing but difficult. Rose and Tubbs are also criticised for the difficulty of their writing. Perhaps we can say that the rhetorical element of Williams' speech is already philosophically significant.

For Augustine, that which is too difficult to understand by most people should not be brought before them but kept instead for the scholars who can comprehend its truth. Williams has had to deal with this question as Archbishop. How much of the truth do you teach? As the Grand Inquisitor says in Dostoevsky, people like nothing better than to lay their freedom at the feet of those in power because the truth of freedom is too great to bear. On stepping down from the post of Archbishop, he remarked of the 'sharia law' debacle, that 'I failed to find the right words. I succeeded in confusing people. I made mistakes – that was probably one of them'.<sup>61</sup> He has often been criticised for being too much of a thinker for the role of Archbishop. This tension however has been both his burden and his brilliance. Truth for Williams is difficult for everybody and he has not shied away from making difficulty the substance of his engagements with most debates. And yet one response he gave to critics who charged him with being too difficult is that such remarks are 'lazy and dishonest'.<sup>62</sup> It is too easy, he said, to take a sentence from an academic lecture and to say 'intellectual gobbledygook' when 'I don't necessarily talk like that when I'm preaching in Peckham'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Telegraph Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams' [online] Available at <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2611/telegraph-interview-with-archbishop-rowan-williams#> [Accessed on 13 July 2013]

<sup>62</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Evening Standard Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams' [online] <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2530/evening-standard-interview-with-archbishop-rowan-williams> [Accessed on: 07 July 2013]

<sup>63</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Evening Standard Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams' [online] <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2530/evening-standard-interview-with-archbishop-rowan-williams> [Accessed on: 07 July 2013]

These are the pedagogical nuances and risks he has made for a faith which tells him that 'everybody is worth whatever time, attention and love you can possibly give'.<sup>64</sup>

Probably more than the other thinkers that we have looked at here, Williams has had to face the difficulty of his pedagogy in the most pressured and visible of environments, unable to hide from the intense scrutiny that comes with such a job. In these environments it is remarkable that he was able to carry the broken middles of his work in the way that he did. He has let ambiguity have a voice and has let the questions be difficult and unanswered. This meant a very real risk at times to his own leadership. But his leadership was one mediated deeply by a faith which trusts difficulty and contradiction, even if that meant risking the break up of the Anglican Communion. But he risked it in order that the oppositions, tensions and failures of recognition within it could have their truth in and as a church which learns. His authority then, as now, in his continued life as a priest and teacher begins, we might say, in the question of how we live and how is it that we 'see and speak into and out of a world that defies any final assessment as to how it shall be described' (Williams, 2008: x).

Finally, perhaps we can say of Williams what he has said about Dostoevsky as a writer. Dostoevsky's writing, for Williams, embodies what it means to be an 'icon'. His writing enacts the fusion of truth seen as independent, or in Hegelian terms, in-itself, and truth as it is lived and known in the actual human life which risks knowing it differently. It is a fusion which enacts the 'de-centring and critique of the unexamined self' (Williams, 2008: 242). It is a critique which marks the substance of the social and political pedagogy of Williams. To be an icon is to be someone whose life is shaped by, because it is vulnerable to a different frame of reference. An iconic character is therefore someone whose brokenness in the disruption caused by awareness of loss and failure is still faithful to the truth of brokenness, for here, truth is a sort of presence 'that offers to nourish and augment what I am' (Williams, 2008:208). There is something of Williams and his work that is an 'iconic' presence in and for this life of truth.

## Philosophy, Religion and Education

The relation between philosophy and religion is an uneasy one. Philosophy asks serious questions of the claims of religion, questions which can undermine its history, doctrines, practices and power. If religion in Hegel is the medium of *Vorstellung*, merely the finite realm of feeling and faith and of representation, then it is always misrepresentation. As Rose argues, God represented as God is an

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<sup>64</sup>Williams, R. 2012 'Evening Standard Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams' [online] <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2530/evening-standard-interview-with-archbishop-rowan-williams> [Accessed on: 07 July 2013]



inconceivable absolute. Only speculative thinking can think God and therein the social and political relations which correspond to religious representation. This is the social and political import of thinking the absolute in Hegel and the absolute significance of philosophical thinking.

In the work of Williams and Tubbs, we have a broken middle between philosophy and religion that puts relation to work. Williams holds on to the language of religion. He takes Hegel to this territory and yet still does justice to the speculative which is 'the philosophical completion of the meaning of religion' (Rose, 2009: 99). Tubbs uses the language of philosophy and not religion. Education or subjective substance is the language for God, preventing too much slippage into the religious domain because the speculative in Hegel, for Tubbs, can think the actuality of religious experience in philosophical terms. Perhaps the distinction between these domains of experience in Tubbs means that there is a dimension of his theory of education yet to risk itself. Or perhaps the speculative in his work manages to carry its religious truth already in and as its own language, questions, struggles, risks and education. By bringing Williams and Tubbs together in the way I have has been to argue that philosophy and religion in their work discovers the difficult but truthful relation between God and education. In Williams, there is a notion of learning but not yet named as such. Whereas for Tubbs, not bound by the constraints of religion, God can be education in-and-for-itself. 'Education in Hegel is not first to comprehend the truth of life as the self-othering of God. But it is perhaps first in comprehending this as a totality of actuality in recollection' (Tubbs, 2008: 165).

Hegel wrote that religion and philosophy are indeed one, that the object of both is the same; that of 'eternal truth ... God and nothing but God' (Hegel, 1895: 19). He goes on to say that 'philosophy... only unfolds itself when it unfolds religion, and in unfolding itself it unfolds religion' (Hegel, 1895: 19). And philosophy also 'renounces its particularity... [and] desires only to immerse itself in this content' (Hegel, 1895: 19). In this way 'philosophy is itself... worship; it is religion' (Hegel, 1895: 20). A philosophy of religion for Hegel, is thus a phenomenology of the standpoint of religious consciousness, able to 'uncover[] the truth and untruth of religious representation' (Rose, 2009: 99).

We can see that for Williams, this means that the theological enterprise has to open out onto a 'sort of darkness' (Williams, 2007: xiii). We must think the nature of our thinking in order to bring us to an awareness that truth is not a reality 'out there' (Williams, 2007: xiv), but somehow a part of thinking's own processes, its own logic, its own negative life. And when this leads him to suggest that it is learning that has something to do with this then we find him suggesting that God has something to do with learning. It is this philosophical re-formation of Williams' work, in large part influenced by his reading of Hegel and Rose that constitutes his thinking in the broken middle of philosophy and religion.

It shows us that Williams is not prepared to subsume the religious under the philosophical. Rather, philosophy returns to be a deepened faith and pedagogy, because it is historical and concrete in its proceedings and thinks 'its own real processes' (Williams, 2007: 69) in and as the life of faith. Williams' Hegel returns him to a theology of the negative because to argue that the one constant in human experience is that truth requires loss is, for Williams, to put the process of learning at the heart of what can be said about God, 'the non-negotiable element in being a thinking subject' (Williams, 2007: 17). Williams is able to speak this truth in both religious and philosophical terms, to speak about the absolute in the terms of a metaphysics and a politics recollecting history as a process of learning, as well as speaking about the absolute as God, in and as the language of the Jewish and Christian narrative of 'God-in-relation to a historical community' (Williams, 2007: 71).

To end the thesis with Tubbs now, is perhaps to do justice to the education that has underpinned the journey of the thesis and the work that is yet to come. For Tubbs, the importance of the relations of life and death and master and slave in his educational reading of Hegelian speculative experience, must not be underestimated. These two relations are seen to structure the way that our thinking, and thus relation, is constituted and known. They are the relations by which freedom is to learn. The concept of recollection carried in and by relation means that the aporetic logic of modern consciousness, in its illusions of independence and freedom from death and the other, looks back at its history and sees its experience of the slave, of the other, of death and so of difficulty and loss, as the way that it keeps learning about itself. Recollection knows how it has exported loss and how it has therefore exported its own truth. For Tubbs, the *absolute* significance of the theory of education in Hegel is that 'freedom, in the education of the philosophy of history...learns to recognise itself in loss and loss in itself' (Tubbs, 2009: 182). Recollecting, he argues, is the 'aporetic voice' (Tubbs, 2009: 182) of the relation that learns.

*'and so we keep on going and try to realise it,  
try to hold it in our simple hands, in  
our overcrowded eyes, and in our speechless heart.  
Try to become it'* (Rilke, 2005: 61)

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